

ARCO ORIENTALIS



SUPPLEMENT I

ARS ORIENTALIS



WALTER M. SPINK

SUPPLEMENT I □ 2000

ARS ORIENTALIS

CHĀCHĀJĪ

PROFESSOR WALTER M. SPINK
FELICITATION VOLUME

STEPHEN MARKEL, GUEST EDITOR

SPONSORED BY

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution
Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan

PUBLISHED BY

The Department of the History of Art
University of Michigan

FREEER GALLERY OF ART

Managing Editor
Margaret A. Lourie

University of Michigan
Editorial Board
Martin J. Powers
Jennifer E. Robertson
Margaret Cool Root
Walter M. Spink
Thelma K. Thomas
Marshall P. S. Wu

Freer Gallery of Art
Editorial Committee
Milo Beach
Joseph Chang
Louise Cort
Vidya Dehejia
Massumeh Farhad
Ann Gunter
Thomas Lawton
Thomas W. Lentz
Jenny So
Jan Stuart
James T. Ulak
Ann Yonemura

Editorial Offices
Department of the History of Art
Tappan Hall
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1357

World Wide Web Address
<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~plourie/>

Electronic Version
The full text of *Ars Orientalis* is available
in the electronic versions of the *Art*
Index.

ISSN 0571-1371
Printed in the United States of America
© 2000 Department of the History of Art,
University of Michigan

Sponsors of the Spink Felicitation Volume

The Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan
Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies,
University of Michigan
Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies,
University of Michigan
Bucyrus-Erie Foundation
Carolyn A. Copeland
Stanislaw J. Czuma
Richard Edwards
Betty Gosling
Mary Lanius
John and Thanomchit Listopad
Stephen Markel
Betty Iverson Monroe
Mary Palmer
Lelia Raley
Horst P. and Sara Weisblat Schastok
Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Showers
Sydney and Linnea Spink
Mary Paul and Bruce Stubbs
Kay and Ashok Talwar
John Adams Thierry
Christine Weisblat
Miriam and Norman Willey

On the cover: Main Buddha, Cave 26, Ajanta. Photo: Courtesy
Asian Art Archives, University of Michigan.

Preface

On account of his being a well-wisher of the world as well as by his happy and excellent rule, he was, indeed, always dear and accessible [to the people] like [their] father, mother and friend.¹

LITTLE DID THE Vākāṭaka minister Varāhadēva know, when he had these words of praise about the father and glorious lineage of his king Hariṣeṇa inscribed in Cave 16 at Ajanta, that more than fifteen hundred years later they would be equally appropriate to another great patron of those majestic caves. Professor Walter M. Spink is widely regarded as the world's leading expert on the Ajanta caves. But he is far more than a mere art historian. His noble compassion for humankind, coupled with his impressive academic record and tremendous breadth of interest in the humanities of both the Orient and the Occident, have elevated Professor Spink in the eyes of his peers to the status of a distinguished senior scholar and, equally praiseworthy, a teacher who gives freely of himself so that others may come to enjoy the arts that so nurture all of our souls. Thus, this tribute volume is dedicated to Walter Spink with sincere fondness and respect. Its title, *Chāchājī* (Beloved Uncle), is an appellation given to Walter in India by his students and long-time friends; it aptly conveys the deep affection with which he is regarded.

Walter's life and achievements are here introduced with a revealing biographical essay by Dr. Bonnie Brereton (University of Michigan, 1979–92) and an analysis of his scholarly oeuvre by Dr. Sara Weisblat Schastok (University of Michigan, 1969–80). Next a list of Professor Spink's numerous erudite publications documents his academic record. The esteem of Walter's colleagues is then demonstrated by six compelling tribute statements. Prof. Richard Edwards recalls his crucial contribution to the distinguished Asian art presence in the Department of the History of Art at the University of Michigan. Prof. Frederick M. Asher stresses his pivotal role in establishing the American Committee for South Asian Art as a dynamic professional association for art historians of South and Southeast Asia. Prof. Susan L. Hunting-

ton praises Walter for his pioneering scholarly leadership and personal generosity. Prof. Michael M. Meister remembers meeting Walter and marvels at his humility of spirit for one so accomplished and respected. Prof. Janice Leoshko applauds Walter's longstanding regard for discerning the primacy of the artist in the creative process. Dr. Donald M. Stadtner (University of Michigan, 1969–71) tells of a side of Walter far removed from the caves of Ajanta yet no less significant for engendering our admiration.

In order to suggest the enduring influence of Professor Spink's life-long work and to provide him with a more personally meaningful tribute, the research articles in this volume have been contributed primarily by his former students, many of whom now hold key positions in leading universities and prestigious museums throughout the United States and India. A few of Walter's particularly close academic colleagues have also participated by submitting either articles or tribute statements. In fact, this guest editor's hardest task by far in this labor of love was deciding which of the many willing scholars to invite as contributors and who had to be regretfully omitted because of the volume's spatial and temporal limitations. In keeping with its emphasis on Professor Spink's areas of scholarly inquiry, the articles focus on his two main research topics: "Rock-cut Architecture of Western India" and "Themes of Kṛṣṇa." In the former, Dr. Suresh Vasant analyzes two unique early Buddhist cave-temples to determine their temporal relationship. Prof. John C. Huntington with Chaya Chandrasekhar (Spink's Ajanta Site Seminar, 1993) studies the use of an important *mudrā* at Ajanta and reflects on its Buddhological significance. Dr. Pia Brancaccio (University of Michigan and the ACSAA Color Slide Project, 1994–95) discusses the patronage and lay orientation of the Buddhist caves at Aurangabad. Prof. Joanna Williams examines the namesake of the Elephanta caves and the intriguing conceptual differences between guardian representations of pachyderms and their portrayals in site-related mythological tableaux. Dr. Stephen Markel (University of Michigan, 1977–89) identifies the narrative episodes in the extensive *Rāmāyaṇa* frieze on the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora and suggests a possible underlying literary source.

The articles grouped under the rubric “Themes of Kṛṣṇa” either explore depictions of Kṛṣṇa in various regional traditions and media or use the image(s) of the deity as a starting point for more extended research. Dr. Donald M. Stadtner discusses the development and variations in the imagery of a momentous event in the early life of Kṛṣṇa. Dr. Vishakha N. Desai (University of Michigan, 1974–77) examines the relationship of the detailed literary distinctions used to characterize Rādhā in the *Rasikapriyā* and her modes of representation in illustrations of the text. Dr. Naval Krishna (University of Michigan, 1976–78) explicates the nature and art historical importance of Bikaneri presentation portraits of Kṛṣṇa. Dr. Robert J. Del Bontà (University of Michigan, 1971–78) studies the sophisticated narrative techniques and expressions in an extraordinary *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* manuscript from Mysore. Dr. John Listopad (University of Michigan, 1984–95) investigates the impact of two chief priests on the development of Kṛṣṇa paintings at Nathdwara. Dr. Stanislaw J. Czuma (University of Michigan, 1961–68) traces the discovery and restoration of a major image of Kṛṣṇa and its inaugural position in the history of Cambodian sculpture.

Many generous individuals and organizations helped to bring this tribute volume to fruition during the course of its seven-year gestation. I would thus like to thank all the contributing authors for their exceptional efforts and patience when pestered with questions of myriad minutiae; the financial sponsors without whose generosity this special volume would have been impossible; the administration of the Department of the History of Art and the editorial board

of *Ars Orientalis* for their commitment in undertaking this publication; Dr. Margaret Lourie, Managing Editor of *Ars Orientalis*, for her steadfast support and encouragement in the conception and production of the volume; and Walter’s loving wife, Nesta, for her eager participation in the merry conspiracy needed to produce this volume without Walter’s prior knowledge and for her many years of friendship to an evolving young graduate student.

Ultimately, it is Walter Spink who must be thanked the most for enriching the lives and artistic appreciation of so many students and colleagues, and for being such a resplendent embodiment of the *joie de vivre* that keeps us all forever young. In the elegant testimony of the American opera patron Otto Herman Kahn,

Those who love art and are truly susceptible to its spell, do die young in the sense that they remain young to their dying day.² □

STEPHEN MARKEL, GUEST EDITOR

NOTES

1. Vasudev Vishnu Mirashi, ed., *Inscriptions of the Vakatakas, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, vol. 5 (Ootacamund: Archaeological Survey of India, 1963), 110, verse 15.

2. Quoted in John P. Bradley et al., *The International Dictionary of Thoughts* (Chicago: J. G. Ferguson, 1975), 51.

ARS ORIENTALIS

S U P P L E M E N T I

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN AND THE SCHOLAR

- 1 **The Life and Times of Walter Spink**
Bonnie Brereton, *University of Michigan*
- 7 **Short Chronologies at Arm's Length: Ajanta and Beyond**
Sara Weisblat Schastok, *University of Chicago*
- 15 **Walter M. Spink: Selected Publications**

TRIBUTE STATEMENTS

- 17 **Colleague at Michigan**
Richard Edwards, *University of Michigan, Ann Arbor*
- 17 **In Praise of Walterjī**
Frederick M. Asher, *University of Minnesota*
- 18 **Homage to a Modern Cave Man**
Susan L. Huntington, *Ohio State University*
- 19 **The Importance of Questions**
Janice Leoshko, *University of Texas, Austin*
- 19 **Spink on Wheels**
Michael W. Meister, *University of Pennsylvania*
- 20 **The Cow-herder Goes to Washington**
Donald M. Stadtner, *Stadtner & Associates, Barra de Navidad, Mexico*

ROCK-CUT ARCHITECTURE OF WESTERN INDIA

- 23 **Tulja Leni and Kondivte Caitya-grhas: A Structural Analysis**
Suresh Vasant, *Pune, India*
- 33 **The Dharmacakramudrā Variant at Ajanta: An Iconological Study**
John C. Huntington with Chaya Chandrasekhar, *Ohio State University*

- 41 **The Buddhist Caves at Aurangabad: The Impact of the Laity**
Pia Brancaccio, *Philadelphia Museum of Art*
- 51 **The Eponymous Elephant of Elephanta**
Joanna Williams, *University of California, Berkeley*
- 59 **The *Rāmāyaṇa* Cycle on the Kailāsanātha Temple at Ellora**
Stephen Markel, *Los Angeles County Museum of Art*

T H E M E S O F K R̄ S N A

- 75 **Sharing the Load of the Lord: Crossing the Yamunā**
Donald M. Stadtner, *Stadtner & Associates, Barra de Navidad, Mexico*
- 83 **Loves of Rādhā in the *Rasikāpriyā* Verses and Paintings**
Vishakha N. Desai, *Asia Society Galleries, New York*
- 93 **Bikaneri *Nazar* Paintings Depicting Kṛṣṇa**
Naval Krishna, *Fortuna Group of Companies, Lucknow, India*
- 99 **See Kṛṣṇa Run: Narrative Painting for Mummadī Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar**
Robert J. Del Bontà, *Asian Art Museum of San Francisco*
- 115 **In the Service of Kṛṣṇa: Paintings from Nathdwara under Dāmodar II
and Govardhanlāl in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art**
John Listopad, *Los Angeles County Museum of Art*
- 127 **The Cleveland Museum's Kṛṣṇa Govardhana and
the Early Phnom Da Style of Cambodian Sculpture**
Stanislaw J. Czuma, *Cleveland Museum of Art*

The Life and Times of Walter Spink

WHEN SCHOLARS of Asian art history hear the name Walter M. Spink, they're apt to think of the rock-cut monuments at Ajanta and Ellora or the Kṛṣṇa theme in Indian miniature painting. But for those who have had the good fortune of knowing Professor Spink as mentor, colleague, or friend, what's more likely to come to mind is a personal anecdote involving the compassionate, creative, and quirky man we know as Uncle Walter, Walterji, or just plain Walter.

There are so many Walter stories to tell. A former student reminisces about the collage of verbal and visual images and symbols of Walter's "Arts: Ideas: East: West" course and how it changed the way she views the world. Ajanta Site Seminar veterans recall magical meanderings through monuments, museums, markets, and villages. At least one Ajanta veteran will attest that following Walter's open-ended itinerary taught her the true meaning of patience. An international student remembers going to meet the famous American professor for the first time in India and finding him at a restaurant near the Ajanta caves dancing to a Frank Sinatra song in a lungi. And there is one who will never forget learning to operate a stick shift under Walter's guidance, driving to the Detroit Institute of Arts. These are only a sample of the simple joys and profound experiences that Walter has generously bestowed upon his students.

If an Indian raconteur were to tell the story of Walter's life, however, he would certainly focus on much grander incidents, and he would probably begin something like this: "On February 16, 1928, a baby boy was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, and immediately the earth shook and flowers rained down." Walter was destined to be special, and many

of the traits we associate with him today were evident early in life. Yet his progression from auspiciously marked infant to renowned art historian has been circuitous and replete with the unexpected and unpredictable. And, as with all great people, there is also a body of folklore about Walter.

Walter's acute aesthetic sensibility, so obvious in everything from his sensuous Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā lectures to the forget-me-nots he nurtures in his garden, took root when he was a young boy. The second of three children, Walter (known to his parents and siblings as "Bud" or "Buddy") was at his happiest exploring brooks and fields and watching turtles and frogs on the idyllic 250-acre Massachusetts farm where the family lived. His parents rented the farm for about ten years while his father, an engineer, supervised the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir, which today supplies most of Boston's tapwater. The project gradually consumed vast areas of pristine forests and farms, as well as five picturesque villages in the Berkshires, forcing residents to abandon their homes and relocate. The sense of poignancy and tragedy arising from the denuding of the landscape and the dislocation of the people made a profound impression on Walter. At the age of nine, he composed one of his first poems, "To Greenwich," in honor of one of the villages destroyed by the reservoir. His reading of it brought tears to the audience of displaced townspeople. When the reservoir was completed, the family moved back to their home in Rhode Island, where Walter had difficulty adjusting to the relatively urban atmosphere of Perryville.

Walter's love of nature provided the stimulus for his early interest in biology and other sciences and propelled him toward achieving recognition as a high

school winner in the Westinghouse Science Talent Search. The *Providence Journal* heralded his honor with the headline, “Bud Spink goes to Washington,” and a reporter accompanied Walter to the nation’s capital, where he met dignitaries including Eleanor Roosevelt and Harry Truman and was offered a summer job working at a zoo. The latter experience caused him to give serious consideration to a career as a zoo director, and when he entered Amherst College, he planned to major in biology.

Walter was attracted to biology by the beauty of animals and the desire to share the experience of that beauty with others. After only a few weeks of college science courses, he realized that biology meant laboratory science and dissections rather than watching animals in the streams and fields. He turned instead to philosophy and Western art history and, after graduating *summa cum laude* in 1949, went on to Harvard to continue studying art history.

At Harvard Walter met some of the people who were to have the greatest impact on his life. Among them was Benjamin Rowland, one of the first Western art historians to write about Indian art. Walter was attracted to this little-known field of study both by Rowland’s approach to teaching and by the exoticism of Indian art itself.

Another influential person was the poet Archibald MacLeish, who selected Walter to participate in his poetry writing seminar. Walter had always enjoyed reading and writing poetry and in high school had even earned some spending money composing verses for greeting card companies. Throughout his life he has continued to write poetry and has enriched his classes with recitations of Yeats, often juxtaposed with translations of Japanese *haiku* and Vaiṣṇava devotional poetry. At least once he had students in his East:West class compose *haiku* and enter them in a contest sponsored by Japan Airlines in the hopes of winning free tickets to Japan. (Unfortunately, no one won.)

Still another Harvard person who was to influence Walter’s life was Richard Edwards, a student of Chinese painting at the time. He and Walter would graduate the same year, 1954; later they would become University of Michigan colleagues, as well as camping and canoeing cohorts and lifelong friends.

Finally, there was Nesta, who has been Walter’s wife, friend, and foil for nearly fifty years. At the time they met, Nesta was a graduate student in Western art history. Intelligent, compassionate, and tolerant of Walter’s idiosyncrasies, Nesta has provided both the groundedness and the freedom for Walter to thrive. At the same time she established her own successful career as a print connoisseur and has recently completed her magnum opus on Whistler lithographs for the Art Institute of Chicago.

Walter and Nesta were married in June 1952 and three days after their wedding flew to England to board a ship bound for India, where Walter, a Fulbright graduate fellow, was headed for dissertation research. On their three-week voyage from Liverpool to Bombay, the Spinks had the company of other Fulbright scholars enroute to their respective research projects, along with British citizens returning to India from home leave. Neither Walter nor Nesta had been to India before, and they settled into Calcutta, where Walter was assigned to work at the National Museum, amid the dual drama of the monsoon storms and the inundation of refugees from Pakistan after the recent partition. Nesta recalls, “We used to say that if we survived that year in India we’d survive married life.”

Walter had set off for India prepared to do his dissertation research on medieval Hindu sculpture in the Liṅgarāja temple site at Bhuvanesvara. Shortly after arriving in India, however, he learned that the inner sanctuaries of active temples were closed to non-Hindus. (Rumors that he attempted to disguise himself as a Hindu by dressing in a dhoti are folklore, although Walter admits that he’s starting to believe them.) Though he realized later that he could have proceeded with his original idea by modifying his proposal and working on related monuments, he became fascinated by the rock-cut Jain monuments that he visited at Khandagiri and Udayagiri in Orissa. He recognized certain stylistic features indicating that they were much later than they were traditionally dated. As he traveled in India he visited myriad other caves, and his thesis developed, as he once put it, “as a way of putting the house of caves in order.”

After returning from India in 1953, Walter wrote his dissertation, “Rock-cut Monuments of the

Andhra Period: Their Style and Chronology.” Later he mused that he was a little embarrassed “about the authority with which I did it. . . . But I did write it with an efficiency that I haven’t rivaled since.” He completed both the writing and the typing in a little more than a year, propelled by the radio broadcasts of the McCarthy hearings in the background, and received his Ph.D. in 1954.

But graduating from Harvard was only one of several momentous events to occur that year. Just two months later the Spinks’ first child, David, was born, and in another two months, Walter was drafted. “Fortunately, the army was extraordinarily accommodating in trying to figure out what they would do with this man who was not only a Ph.D. in Indian art from Harvard but who also was older than most other draftees,” Nesta recalls. “They dug into his past and discovered his science background, and so they sent him for medical training in San Antonio.” After completing his training, Walter was posted to a field hospital in Massachusetts, where he was assigned to work in the unlikely position of finance clerk.

The army allowed Walter to be discharged a few months before his two-year tour of duty was over so that he could begin teaching at Brandeis University. He remained there from 1956 to 1961 and during one of those years served as acting chair of the fine arts department. In that capacity he left a lasting mark of which he is justly proud: he reduced the faculty teaching load from three to two courses per semester, a policy that remains in effect today.

In 1961 Walter began teaching at the University of Michigan, where he soon initiated or took an active role in numerous projects, including the Asian Art Archives, the *Ars Orientalis* editorial board, and the American Committee for South Asian Art color slide project. Since that time he has compiled a densely packed curriculum vitae listing his service on dozens of committees dedicated to teaching, exhibiting, and promoting knowledge of South Asian art. The vita also reveals Walter’s success at obtaining funding for these projects and the myriad honors he has received for his work.

Walter has continued his research with a dedication and tenacity matched by few other research scholars. For over four decades he has returned regu-

larly to Ajanta, some years two or more times, to examine not only inscriptions, floor plans, and iconography but also the presence of clarified butter (*gee*) residue (indicating ritual use), the typological evolution of door hinge socket holes (useful for establishing the chronological development of the caves), and the work habits of present-day artisans (for insight into their ancient counterparts). Each new trip brings new insights (and lost flashlights).

Since completing his initial research, Walter has been more interested in the richness of the fifth-century monuments, which he feels have more solvable problems. In the process, he has stumbled upon a startling new view that, he claims, he never realized could be conceivable until he worked his way into it. This is the idea that all the caves at Ajanta as well as four or five related sites were built in the relatively short reign of one king.

Spink’s ideas—stated boldly and insistently in dozens of articles—have revolutionized the history of this site. Earlier theories held that the Mahāyāna cave-temples had been created over a period of 200 years, from the fifth to the seventh century, or even later. Spink’s “short chronology,” now familiar to virtually all historians and art historians studying India, compressed the developments into a mere decade and a half.

From approximately 462 to 477 C.E., Spink maintains, the site experienced a sudden burst of pious activity under the patronage of the Vākāṭaka emperor Hariṣeṇa. During his reign, Spink believes, political and artistic achievements reached a height that was without parallel in the world. Ajanta saw the simultaneous excavation of several caves through the support of both the emperor and a consortium of wealthy and powerful courtiers. Competition with the rival Aśmaka dynasty resulted in an uneven pace of development. After Hariṣeṇa’s death in 477, Spink maintains, the site’s original patrons abandoned their excavation projects, and new donors, eager to take advantage of the opportunity to make merit, hastily added intrusive carvings in any available space. After around 480, the region came under the control of a Hindu ruler, and not another image of the Buddha was ever made at Ajanta.

Walter often compares the murals of the

Mahāyāna portion of the site to a time capsule, documenting palace architecture, furniture, interior decor, hairstyles, jewelry, textiles, clothing, musical instruments, and cooking utensils. A virtual archive of contemporary life, the caves reflect the splendor of a golden age that Walter argues flourished suddenly and faded just as quickly in the second half of the fifth century.

His goal at one time was eventually to be able to say just when every image, window, door jamb, and pillar was constructed in a sequence from 462 to 485 C.E., an undertaking he himself characterized as “obsessive.” Walter contends that although he is sometimes accused of being interested in chronology, he’s actually interested in biography and the life of the site. “Life goes along from year to year and just as you can study a person and what he was doing and how he changed from year to year, you can do the same thing with this site.”

As important as his own research is to Walter, he is equally committed to providing both Indian and non-Indian students with the opportunity to see Ajanta firsthand and to grapple with the practical problems of how and why the work proceeded. His site seminar started well over twenty years ago, when Walter began taking a small group of University of Michigan students to Ajanta during the winter break. Later the course evolved into a two-week summer seminar drawing both graduate and undergraduate students from around the world. Generally the group assembles in Mumbai, then moves on to relevant museums and monuments at Elephanta, Ellora, and Ajanta.

The group spends eight days at Ajanta, where each day Walter assigns a new problem for the group to work on. The human aspects of art history are important for Walter. Why did some paintings end up sloppy? Was this group of artists less skilled than the others, or were they just eager to finish up quickly so they could eat lunch? After the work for the day is finished, Walter and the students typically pass the evenings playing bridge, drumming, listening to classical music, or enjoying other cultural pursuits.

The problem of funding the site seminar has occupied much of Spink’s time and energy. He is famous, and in some circles infamous, for his success

in obtaining grants, as well as for his creative finance schemes, which include juggling accounts, creating work-study projects, and contributing his own frequent flyer tickets and funding. His willingness to be flexible with his own time in order to allow a few more students to go along has cost him a considerable amount of his own money. But India—in all its sensory glory, its history, and its wonder—is a treasure that Walter feels is crucial to share with developing students.

Walter’s generosity and love of beauty extend into virtually every facet of life. In the dead of winter he often surprises friends with the gift of a daffodil bulb for forcing—complete with a container and gravel. For years he’s graciously hosted and cooked spaghetti dinners for his classes. To the students who come to do archival work projects in the study of his house he offers coffee, tea, and music—Bach, Mozart, and Shankar are among the favorites. It is gestures like these that prompted one of his doctoral students to refer to Walter in his dissertation as “a model of what it is to be a cultivated and humane person; he is a man I would like to be like.”

Like the Indian artisans whose work he knows so well, Walter has carved out a labyrinth of cells in the cellar of his home, transforming it into a scholarly sanctuary lined with books and enlivened with Indian artifacts and textiles. And in one corner, stashed away in huge, secondhand suitcases, is a horde of T-shirts, jeans, sneakers, baseball hats, and toys, purchased at rummage sales and awaiting Walter’s next trip to India for distribution among villagers there. Folklore has it that the demise of Pan Am was due, at least in part, to their liberal policy toward Walter and his excess baggage requests.

India also has taken its toll on the Spink family over the years. During a family trip in the mid-60s, Walter contracted Guillain-Barre Syndrome, an autoimmune disease that nearly took his life and left him with a slight limp and a tremor in his hands. Fortunately, he was at home when the symptoms became most apparent, and he was able to obtain treatment in Ann Arbor. Another, equally terrifying incident took place several years later when Walter, Nesta, and their three children, David, Phillip, and Ann, were living in India. The drivers of two school busses,

each carrying one of the Spink boys, decided to race. The bus carrying Phillip careened off the road and down a cliff, where a small tree prevented it from rolling to the bottom and virtually certain death for all inside.

Walter has been called a visionary with a deep passion for sharing and preserving the beauty he sees around him. Among the myriad projects on his agenda are promotional videos for the site seminar, teaching videos for courses on South Asian art and architecture, and proposals designed to preserve Ajanta and other monument sites from deterioration.

The latter are particularly crucial in light of the recent phenomenon of cultural tourism, which is making the future of Ajanta's precious time capsule as precarious as an all-but-forgotten farm in the Berkshires of Massachusetts. Whether these and Walter's other visions become realized, surely they will not be the last proposals on Walter's crowded agenda, even after he retires.

Those of us who have had the good fortune of knowing Walter as art historian and friend can only wonder what our lives would be like today if he actually had gone on to direct a zoo. □

Short Chronologies at Arm's Length: Ajanta and Beyond

THIS ESSAY, originally offered during the 1990 Association for Asian Studies meeting at the invitation of Robert Brown, posits that Walter Spink's short chronologies for Indian rock-cut architecture have led South Asian art history away from British scholarship on India in the important dimension of historical time and that they have shaped a generation's attempts to understand distant centuries. In developing the perspective that the short chronology is an intellectual phenomenon of our time, I propose to push back from the heavily laden table of specific short chronologies and to look at them, instead, at arm's length.

The historian of Indian art can scarcely avoid some immersion in chronological studies as there are relatively few dated objects from ancient times, but looking at this approach to art from a distance offers a broader sphere in which to evaluate these efforts. The customary approach to Walter Spink's work is with questions along the lines of the following: "Is Spink's short chronology correct? Or is the old long chronology really still right?" But from an arm's length perspective, different questions come into focus: why are there so many long chronologies inherited from the British period and so many shortened chronologies being offered in their stead? What picture of India was received by postwar and post-Independence scholars as South Asian studies emerged from their British colonial preserve?

ARBITRARY CHRONOLOGIES

Ajanta, a site discovered by a British officer on a tiger hunt in 1819 and the primary focus of Walter

Spink's research, has been said to have been excavated over the course of more than 100 years extending from the fifth century into the seventh century of the common era. The appearance of figures clad in Persian dress in Cave 1 has been linked to a specific historical occurrence and cited as proof to anchor an extended chronology for the site.

Such a way of approaching the site, with assumptions about date and duration determined prior to a consideration of the objects themselves, is what I shall call the "arbitrary chronology." The arbitrary chronology—typically extending the history of a site—is inseparable from British scholarship on India. Thomas Metcalf summarizes influential attitudes held by Fergusson and others in *An Imperial Vision*.¹ The assumption that India went steadily downhill from the peak of her art, from periods when her art was "ennobled" by Western influence, to periods of indigenous Indian forms associated with Hinduism, has greatly influenced the history of India's art: An arbitrary chronology of Gandhāran art placed those more "classical" images as earlier—and better—than those with more Indic features. Early Indian art is still widely conceptualized and taught as the history of Buddhist art "giving way" to Hindu art, even though, for example, the history of Skanda-Kārttikeya and Pārvati Pañch-Agni Tapas images extends back into the Ikṣvāku period in south India and Brahmanical images in the north are among the earliest representations of deities in human form in India.

The flavor of European cultural assumptions is most immediately evident in these instances of arbitrary chronologies, but Metcalf's evaluation of the Raj encourages art historians to see both the arbitrary chronology and its subcategory, the extended

chronology, as part of a common cultural context:

[In the wake of the 1857 uprising]. . .the British were determined to know, and so to master, their Indian dependency; and hence they set on foot that search for knowledge of India and its peoples that informed so much of the later-nineteenth-century imperial enterprise and underlay such works as Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*. . . . At no time, however, did the Victorians' apparently disinterested search for "scientific" knowledge, or their aesthetic eclecticism, exist in India apart from the power relationships of colonialism.²

Metcalf advances the view that it was not a close study of ancient Indian monuments themselves that led to assessments of India's progressive mediocrity but rather a need to justify British presence in, and control over, India in the nineteenth century that so colored the past. In no small part through the vehicle of its crafts, India was consistently presented in England as an unchanging traditional society, as in this review of the Indian section of the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition from the *Times* in 1886:

At a single step, the visitor is carried from the wild, mad whirl of the individual competitive struggle for existence to which civilisation has been reduced in the ever changing West, into the stately splendour of that unchanging antique life of the East, the tradition of which has been preserved in pristine purity only in India.³

The construction of a dynastic history of India—with the British Raj at the cultural and architectural pinnacle—was a fundamental rationalization for the imperial presence in India, and the neat pigeonholing of objects attached to those periods a natural consequence of it. The alleged ineffectiveness of Indians at accomplishing their own ends (the stagnant society image) was extended to the past in order to justify the present order. According to this analysis, long, extended chronologies should be seen not as a byproduct but as an integral part of British thinking on the subject of ancient India. In this intellectual/political appa-

ratus created for the presentation to a British public of an India fit to be a subject territory, it would not be assumed that projects of ancient Indian rulers were completed with purpose or on a schedule.

Indian scholars, too, have been among the avid proponents of some long chronologies. U. P. Shah's dating of the Śāmalājī sculptures⁴ and the preoccupation of this noted scholar of Jain iconography with dates for these images is the example with which I am most familiar. Seen in the context of his time, Shah's work was, I suggest, affected by British approaches to Indian art on the one hand and by Indian political realities of the early post-Independence period on the other hand.

British scholarship maintained its strong position in the 1950s, and good art was old art in the British scheme of golden ages and subsequent declines; the best art was that linked somehow to that of Europe; and originality—a place at the beginning of a tradition—the highest honor. Thus in looking at the Śāmalājī sculptures, Shah sought to anchor them firmly in the fourth century, contemporary with at least some phase of Gandhāran sculpture. He linked such features as the Śāmalājī sculptures' heavy scarves to the drapery detailing characteristic of Gandhāran art, without consideration of the long tradition of luxuriant folded sashes similarly represented in indigenous Indian sculpture, extending from the Bharhut railing figures to the Kushān period at Mathura.

This assumption of Gandhāran "influence" happens to be an interpretation with which I have previously stated my disagreement,⁵ but more to the point here, Shah's way of thinking about Śāmalājī style exemplifies, in part, a strong tradition of British and British-conditioned scholarship. Another prominent feature of Shah's scholarship on Śāmalājī, and one characteristic of early post-Independence scholarship in Gujarat, is the certainty that the stupa of Devni Mori located adjacent to the village of Śāmalājī—and now beneath the waters of a reservoir—was constructed in the late fourth century. Those Western scholars⁶ who have analyzed the same information have, in contrast, all dated the stupa somewhat later. At issue is not so much the date itself but the implications of such an early date for any site in Gujarat. The title of one Shah paper, "Western Indian Sculpture

and the So-Called Gupta Influence,”⁷ summarizes the position of scholars at M. S. University in Baroda: Devni Mori, in Gujarat, was identifiable as the source of the more famous Mathura-Sarnath style.

Shah's conclusions about the antiquity both of Devni Mori and of the Śāmalājī sculptures themselves dovetailed neatly with historical events in India in the 1950s: the establishment of the states of independent India. The Government of India's *White Paper on Indian States*, published in 1950, reports the concern with the governance of states near India's border with Pakistan. A stable and efficient administration was defined as the essential priority.⁸ It was ultimately decided to merge all the Gujarat states, even Baroda, which was acknowledged as having the resources to run and maintain an efficient administration, into the Bombay presidency in 1948.⁹ Decisions to overrule the paradigm of provinces established along linguistic lines, as recommended by the Congress Party from the 1920s until 1945,¹⁰ led to struggles over states' reorganization that dominated Indian politics from 1953 to 1956.¹¹ Gujarati nationalists cited the greatness of the Solankis, of ancient Aparanta and medieval Gurjaradesa; they decried the dismemberment of Gujarat by Marathas and British alike. In their assessment, Gujarat was the second political power of India after that of Delhi during the medieval period.¹² In 1956, many new states were created along linguistic lines, but the Bombay presidency was not divided between Gujarati and Marathi speakers until four more years of agitation had passed. In 1960, the year Shah's monograph on Śāmalājī was published, Gujarat and Maharashtra became separate states. The pervasive sense of Gujarati nationalism in Shah's work on Śāmalājī makes his work fully congruent with political considerations arising in the reconfiguration of post-Independence India.

Shah's long chronology owes much to two political agendas, that of outgoing British India and the statehood movement of the 1940s and 1950s. There was little room within this scheme governed by a preoccupation with dates for iconological studies of the Śāmalājī sculptures. It is certainly worthy of note that U. P. Shah, a scholar otherwise known for his erudite studies of Jain iconography, never approached the Śāmalājī sculptures from a similar perspective.

INTRODUCTION OF SHORT CHRONOLOGIES

If it is no accident that extended and “arbitrary” chronologies are a salient feature of the British tradition that has yet to be fully reviewed in every instance (thereby continuing to affect the state of the field today), it is also no accident that American scholars have been instrumental in challenging these chronologies. As outside parties at some distance from British scholarship and political agendas, American scholars—together with European counterparts—have sought to establish a new knowledge of Indian culture and civilization founded upon closer readings of Indic traditions.

Spink's seminal 1958 article,¹³ for example, takes a fresh look at the chronology of early Buddhist architecture in India, a sequence originating in a nineteenth-century assumption that the donor, Bhūtapāla, of the inscription at the site of Karli should be identified with the last Śunga king, Devabhūti, who ruled ca. 80–70 b.c. What was once seen as a compelling similarity of names is no longer seen as such, but the Karli *caitya* (prayer) hall—while outside the region under Śunga control—was dated to the Śunga period, thus pushing more tentative forms back still earlier. It had been agreed, however, that the sculptures on the façade could not be of such early date; they were interpreted as later additions. With detailed photographs, an essential tool of American scholarship, Spink was able to show that the architectural details above the figures were carved so as to make room for them, thus showing that these images were part of the monument's original plan.

In Spink's reassessment, the date of the Karli cave became later, the resulting chronology more compressed; Spink's first short chronology combined a close study of the caves' features with an assessment of historical evidence. The group of *caitya* halls under consideration in this early work represented individual sites widely separated. Ajanta would offer a larger number of more complex structures but all at a single site, allowing—and demanding—a more detailed and complicated analysis.

Spink's development of this approach to chronological problems, begun in his years as a student of Benjamin Rowland's at Harvard, was strengthened

by John Rosenfield's examination of dated Buddha images from Sarnath.¹⁴ This study, published in 1963, contradicted even more conclusively the British tendency to associate the height of political power with the apogee of artistic efforts. The dates corresponding to A.D. 474 and 476 on three of the finest of Sarnath images, when Gupta power was already dissipated, was eloquent argument against assumptions that linked dynastic power to a visual counterpart. A tendency to project a correlation between political and aesthetic power back into India's past is yet another salient feature of British thinking that contemporary scholarship has rightfully questioned, recognizing that the characteristics art historians define as "styles" are typically features that characterize the production of groups of artists within regions where they were engaged to work. The so-called Amaravati style, for example, should not be seen as coterminus with the reign of the Sātavāhanas and the Ikṣvākus and disappearing with the evaporation of their political power, as I have discussed elsewhere.¹⁵

Walter Spink's early work on the Buddhist caves (and Rosenfield's reassessment of Sarnath sculpture) made it evident that India had a complex history worthy of further study, that India was definitely not the unchanging timeless world easily classified and mastered, as represented in so many British writings. I am suggesting that Walter Spink's studies of the rock-cut architecture in Maharashtra have brought a new shape to our study of the past and, in the arena of fifth/sixth-century Indian art, represent a particular delineation of where past ends and present begins. In Spink's eyes, his early work was to rescue the state of knowledge from "disarray."¹⁶ Now forty years later, we should recognize that Spink's study of Ajanta marks a separation from the knowledge received from colonial scholarship. New arguments have been advanced. India is now assumed to have had a history, evolving forms within its own religious and social orders quite independent of European vocabularies (Gupta temples have been separated from the notion of Greek influence) and separated from nineteenth-century colonial prejudices (India was in a state of decline since the first-second century A.D., as "proven" by the growth of Hindu art

and by the presumed movement of Gandhāran style away from Mediterranean appearances). This is not to argue that we are now in a state of truth but rather to recognize that the historical structures in which we operate today are distanced from the intellectual apparatus of the Raj. Spink's short chronologies have been critical to making this conceptual break and continue to characterize one important facet of post-colonial scholarship on India.

A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

A scientific approach to plumbing the ancient history of India, the concentration on images and monuments themselves through photographs, plans, and measurements to capture every nuance and detail, is a strong current in American scholarship from the 1960s through the 1980s. In particular, the 35mm SLR camera and the abundance in the West of good, inexpensive film have been central to American methodologies and essential to their hegemony. In our churning of the milky ocean, with a strong dollar wrapped around the scholar's boarding pass functioning as *axis mundi*, the camera and the short chronology have emerged together.

Measuring the carvers' and designers' logical courses of action, recreating the path of their physical movement through the site of Ajanta, and proposing the sequences of technological developments there—harvesting many journeys to the site—describe Spink's career of grappling with the tremendous complexity of Ajanta. On-site photography has yielded the images Spink has studied so carefully to create his reconstruction of the site. While many scholars have embraced the general outline of Spink's argument that the excavation of Ajanta spans a generation rather than several, there has been reluctance to accept the very tight dates advanced more recently.

Joanna Williams' relegation of Ajanta to an appendix of her comprehensive study of Gupta style acknowledges Spink's shifting of the discourse on Ajanta:

The discussion of the caves of Ajanta in an appendix deserves some explanation, for these are

often cited as masterpieces of Gupta art. . . . One primary explanation lies less in the caves than in the scholarship about them. As Wayne Begley has put it, the study of Ajanta has become a field within a field. To do justice to the topic would require another book. . . . In the controversy about the dates of the Ajanta caves, the suggestions of Walter Spink are focal.¹⁷

CHAINS OF SOLUTIONS

In coming to grips with Walter Spink's place in the chronicles of South Asian studies, I see in his work more than an embrace of complexity. Essential to Spink's work is the subdivision of the site from individual rock-cut *caitya* hall or *vihāra* into the specific constituent parts of each. This approach was already evident in his early *Marg* article highlighting Buddha images, door frames, cave plans, and so on.¹⁸ In more recent years he added placement of caves with respect to the solar cycle, methods of hanging doors, and the preparation of wall surfaces, to name analytical frameworks that transcend art history's traditional preserve. He has considered the technology of excavation and the presence of artisans, but, more importantly, he has sought to define the length of the intervals *between* the physical marks.

What comes to mind in evaluating Spink's contributions over the course of his career is George Kubler's *The Shape of Time*, essays in which he develops an intellectual structure to take the history of things beyond the model of biology. The language of Michael Faraday and the field of electrodynamics is better suited to the situation of art, Kubler proposes, "especially if we are dealing in art with the transmission of some kind of energy; with impulses, generating centers, and relay points; with increments and losses in transit; with resistances and transformers in the circuit."¹⁹ Kubler defines the historian as one who portrays time itself, composing meaning that had been invisible to both his subjects and his own contemporaries. Kubler proposes that in such an endeavor, biological time, with its statistically predictable lengths, fails to account for the "intermittent and variable" nature of historical time, in which the inter-

vals between actions as well as the events themselves are of interest, and these may be thicker or thinner.²⁰

Walter Spink has constructed an approach to Ajanta that embraces just such a vision of history. Whereas Philippe Stern selected the column as his unit of stylistic measure, determining that Cave 7 was among the first excavations at the site's second phase, along with others clustered to the left and right of the ancient nucleus of Caves 9, 10, and 12,²¹ Spink's evaluation of many motifs and factors led him to propose that, while parts of Cave 7 are among the earliest work at the site, other features in this same *vihāra* are among the latest work. The truncated plan of Cave 7 didn't concern Stern, for example, while Spink recognized its unorthodox shape as indicative of patronage problems and has pointed out the similarity of the Cave 7 Buddha—specifically the pillars in its throneback—to later painted thronebacks in Cave 16 and to the main shrine group in Cave Upper 6.

Most scholars can certainly sympathize with Stern's explanation of his focus on columns in isolation: because the complete ensemble of forms would lead much too far and wouldn't have the clarity of the evolution of a single element.²² We mislead ourselves if we characterize Spink's method as a sophisticated form of stylistic analysis. In its richly layered consideration of many features simultaneously, his is work of a very different order.

Spink's work on Ajanta has affected the history of Indian art at a broader level as well. Just as his article on Karli shifted a series of dates for other early sites, *Ajanta to Ellora*²³ sketched out a series of relationships among the major sites of Ajanta, Elephanta, Ellora, and Badami that has yet to be fully developed in terms of iconological aspects. Here, too, concepts advanced by Kubler are useful in evaluating Spink's history of this series of sites. Style and the static group of entities comprising it have been replaced with a more fluid set of shifting relations. Which are the "prime works" and which are their "replications"?²⁴ It is interesting that Kubler—looking back through time—mentions Ajanta in passing, characterizing it as a "replication," as "probably a pale reflection of a lost art from the urban halls of princes."²⁵ Spink's work, however, looks forward from the accomplishments and inventions of Ajanta and represents this

site as the prime object within a new series of objects (the caves of Ajanta, Aurangabad, Elephanta, and Ellora). Kubler's term, a "linked series of solutions composing a sequence,"²⁶ characterizes both Spink's micro-level studies of Ajanta as well as the macro-cosm of rock-cut architecture of the fifth through eighth centuries. In Spink's description of his attempts to line up the links correctly, to locate each event in relation to every other, he is developing a grid of events in time and space with all of a cave's features somewhere on it. Spink has focused on Ajanta as a unit with literally thousands of component parts to be understood in formal sequences that arise from attempts to find solutions to problems and that can be linked together over time:

Every important work of art can be regarded both as a historical event and as a hard-won solution to some problem. . . . The important clue is that any solution points to the existence of some problem to which there have been other solutions, and that other solutions to this same problem will most likely be invented to follow the one now in view. As the solutions accumulate, the problem alters. The chain of solutions nevertheless discloses the problem.²⁷

The final dimension of Spink's short chronologies to be discussed here, of his linked problems and solutions, returns to the concept of intervals of time between defining events. He has thrown off another axiom of British colonial scholarship, suggesting that "traditional" ancient Indian technology was not necessarily slow, that the speed of labor could be enhanced by increasing the number of laborers, and that Ajanta gives evidence of this very phenomenon (fig. 1). This conclusion, another building block of the short chronology, has emerged from his immersion in Ajanta's details and a passion for their internal logic.

We can make out, at least in part, how the work was organized. Many different workmen were

busy at once, and each one was assigned a particular portion of rock which he furrowed out. Almost certainly each man was paid according to how much he actually did. For this reason ridges of stone were left between the furrows, so that the cubic-footage of rock removed could be measured by the master architect or the paymaster. . . . A very similar system is used on road work in India today, where each workman digs out a prescribed and easily measurable section of earth separated by reserved earth ridges from the next workman's precinct.²⁸

The unfinished Cave 24 interior sums up Walter Spink's contributions to art history—an ability to tease from unpromising raw material conclusions that compel, and to enjoy the startling effect of such an image that challenges conventional thinking about what is significant in art. Relieved from the burden of an anti-Indian agenda, even the time value of labor reverses British thinking on ancient India.

Walter Spink's challenges to the writing of history were the intellectual starting point for many studies from the 1970s, my own included. In challenging orthodoxies unorthodoxly no one could have been a better mentor to those of us among his students who belong to "the lost generation of humanities Ph.D.s" with careers that have meandered away from the slide library and the stacks. Walter's own broad and varied interests always suggested that no single path need be followed through life. As dedicated as he has been to the cave art of western India, Ajanta in particular, his lectures were far more likely to include Yeats than Yazdani, the history of prints rather than of princely states. While as students we might marvel and then despair that every syllabus seemed to veer sharply toward Ajanta or Ellora, and wonder when he would get down to the business of teaching us Indian art, in truth Walter has been simultaneously a painstaking scholar and a teacher without equal in the syllabus of life. This article is offered in affectionate appreciation of Walter Spink, the scholar, the teacher, the person. □



FIG. 1.
*Ajanta, Cave 24, unfinished interior,
looking toward the rear.*
Photo: Asian Art Archives,
University of Michigan.

Notes

1. Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision: Indian Architecture and Britain's Raj* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 28–29.
2. Metcalf, *Imperial Vision*, 242–43.
3. Metcalf, *Imperial Vision*, 146.
4. U. P. Shah, *Sculptures from Śāmalājī and Rodā (North Gujarat) in the Baroda Museum = Bulletin of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery* 13 (Baroda, 1960).
5. Sara L. Schastok, *The Śāmalājī Sculptures and 6th Century Art in Western India* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985).
6. J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, “The Pre-Muslim Antiquities of Sind,” in *South Asian Archaeology 1975*, ed. J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), 151–74; Joanna G. Williams, *The Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); and Schastok, *Śāmalājī Sculptures*.
7. U. P. Shah, “Western Indian Sculpture and the So-Called Gupta Influence,” in *Aspects of Indian Art*, ed. P. Pal (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 44–48.
8. Government of India, *White Paper on the Indian States* (Delhi: Ministry of States, 1950), 42.
9. Government of India, *White Paper*, 42–43.
10. Robert Hardgrave, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970), 84.
11. Hardgrave, *India*, 84, quoting Michael Brecher.
12. Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 23.
13. Walter Spink, “On the Development of Early Buddhist Art in India,” *The Art Bulletin* 40.2 (1958): 95–104.
14. John Rosenfield, “On the Dated Carvings of Sārnāth,” *Artibus Asiae* 26 (1963): 10–26.
15. Sara L. Schastok, “Bronzes in the Amaravati Style: Their Role in the Writing of Southeast Asian History,” in *Ancient Indonesian Sculpture*, ed. M. J. Klokke and P. L. Scheurleer (Leiden: Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde, 1994), 33–56.
16. Spink, “Early Buddhist Art,” 99.
17. Williams, *Art of Gupta India*, 181–86.
18. Walter Spink, *Ajanta to Ellora* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1967).
19. George Kubler, *The Shape of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 9.
20. Kubler, *Shape of Time*, 13.
21. Philippe Stern, *Colonnes indiennes d'Ajantā et d'Ellora*, Publications du Musée Guimet, Recherches et documents d'art et d'archéologie 11 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972).
22. Stern, *Colonnes indiennes*, 10.
23. Spink, *Ajanta to Ellora*.
24. Kubler, *Shape of Time*, 130.
25. Kubler, *Shape of Time*, 40.
26. Kubler, *Shape of Time*, 49.
27. Kubler, *Shape of Time*, 33.
28. Walter Spink, “Ajanta: A Brief History,” in *Aspects of Indian Art*, 55.

Walter M. Spink: Selected Publications

BOOKS

Ajanta: A Brief History and Guide. Ann Arbor: Asian Art Archives, University of Michigan, 1994.

The Axis of Eros. New York: Schocken Books, 1973.

The Quest for Krishna: Paintings and Poetry of the Krishna Legend. Ann Arbor: By the Author, 1972.

Krishnamandala: A Devotional Theme in Indian Art. Exhibition catalogue. Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1971.

Ajanta to Ellora. Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, and Bombay: Marg Publications, 1967.

ARTICLES AND MONOGRAPHS

“Wall Painting [at Ajanta].” In *The Dictionary of Art*, vol. 15, pp. 553–58. Edited by J. Turner. New York: Grove Dictionaries, 1996.

“The Earliest Vākāṭaka Cave Shrine: An Anomalous Stupa in the Ghatotkacha Vihāra,” vol. 1, pp. 171–80. In *Śrī Nāgābhinandauam: Dr. M. S. Nagaraja Rao Festschrift*. Bangalore: Dr. M. S. Nagaraja Rao Felicitation Committee, 1995.

“Topics for Study and Discussion in the Vakataka Caves at Ajanta and Aurangabad.” In *Indian Painting: Essays in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, pp. 436–49. Edited by B. N. Goswamy in association with U. Bhatia. New Delhi: Lalit Kali Akademi, 1995.

“The End of Imagery at Ajanta.” In *New Trends in Indian Art and Archaeology: S. R. Rao's 70th Birthday Felicitation Volume*, vol. 2, pp. 337–48. Edited by B. U. Nayak and N. C. Ghosh. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1992.

“The Vākāṭaka Caves at Ajantā and Their Successors.” In *Reappraising Gupta History: Festschrift Honouring Srivatsa Goyal*, pp. 248–62. Edited by B. C. Chhabral. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1992.

“The Caves at Ajanta.” *Archaeology* 45.6 (November–December 1992): 52–60.

(With A. Rane). “The Warlis.” *Pathik* 3.3 (April 1992): 8–10.

“Ajanta in a Historical and Political Context (Continued): Reply to K. Khandalavala, A. Jamkhedkar, B. Deshpande,” *Pathik* 3.4 (July 1992): 16–25.

“Before the Fall: Pride and Piety at Ajanta.” In *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, pp. 65–77. Edited by B. S. Miller. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992.

“The Achievement of Ajantā.” In *The Age of the Vākāṭakas*, pp. 177–202. Edited by A. M. Shastri. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1992.

“The Vakatakas' Flowering and Fall.” In *Proceedings of International Seminar on the Art of Ajanta*, pp. 213–42. Edited by R. Parimoo, 1991. Also in *The Art of Ajanta: New Perspectives*, pp. 71–99. Edited by R. Parimoo et al. New Delhi: Books & Books, 1991.

“The Archaeology of Ajantā.” *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 67–94.

“Notes on Buddha Images.” In *The Art of Ajanta: New Perspectives*, pp. 213–41. Edited by R. Parimoo et al. New Delhi: Books & Books, 1991.

“Ajanta in a Historical and Political Context.” *Pathik* 2.1 (September 1990): 5–17.

“A Recently Discovered Buddha Image at Aurangabād.” In *Ratna-Chandrikā: Pauorama of Oriental Studies (Shri R. C. Agrawala Festschrift)*, pp. 189–96. Edited by D. Handa and A. Agrawal. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1989.

(With Frederick Asher). “Maurya Figural Sculpture Reconsidered.” *Ars Orientalis* 19 (1989): 1–25.

“Making Ajanta.” In *Making Things in South Asia: The Role of Artist and Craftsman* (Proceedings of the South Asia Seminar), pp. 34–51. Edited by M. W. Meister. Philadelphia: Department of South Asia Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1988.

“Ajanta's Paintings: A Checklist for Their Dating.” In *Felicitation Volume in Honour of Srimati Pupul Jayakar*, pp. 457–68. Edited by L. Chandra. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1987.

“A Reconstruction of Events Related to the Development of Vakataka Caves.” In *Kusumāñjali: New Interpretation of Indian Art and Culture; Sh. C. Sivaramamurti Conmemoration Volume*, vol. 1, pp. 185–90. Edited by M. S. Nagaraja Rao. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1987.

- “Flaws in Buddhist Iconology.” In *Facets of Indian Art: A Symposium Held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 26, 27, 28 April and 1 May 1982*, pp. 3–8. Edited by R. Skelton et al. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986.
- “Ajanta’s Chronology: Solstitial Evidence.” *Ars Orientalis* 15 (1985): 97–119.
- “Ajanta’s Chronology: Cave 7’s Twice-born Buddha.” In *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia*, pp. 103–16. Edited by A. K. Narain. New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1985.
- “The Great Cave at Elephanta: A Study of Sources.” In *Essays on Gupta Culture*, pp. 235–82. Edited by B. L. Smith. Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1983.
- “The Elaboration of the Myth.” In *Krishna the Divine Lover: Myth and Legend through Indian Art*, pp. 102–21. Edited by E. Isaaco. London: Serindia Publications, 1982.
- “Ajanta’s Chronology: Politics and Patronage.” In *Kalādarśana: American Studies in the Art of India*, pp. 109–26. Edited by J. G. Williams. New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing in collaboration with the American Institute of Indian Studies, 1981.
- “Ajanta’s Chronology: Cave 1’s Patronage and Related Problems.” In *Chhavi-2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume*, pp. 144–57. Edited by A. Krishna. Banaras: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981.
- “The Ecology of Art: India and the West.” In *Symposium on Mass Culture, Language, and Arts in India, Duke University, Durham, NC, 1970*, pp. 72–97. Edited by M. L. Apte. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1978.
- “Jogeśwari.” *Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art Dr. Moti Chandra Commemoration Volume*. Special number (1978): 1–35.
- “Bāgh: A Study.” *Archives of Asian Art* 30 (1976–77): 53–84.
- “Ajantā’s Chronology: The Crucial Cave.” *Ars Orientalis* 10 (1975): 143–69.
- “The Splendours of Indra’s Crown: A Study of Mahāyāna Developments at Ajantā.” The Sir George Birdwood Memorial Lecture, 23 May 1974. *Journal of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce* 122.5219 (1974): 743–67.
- “The Cage of Form.” In *Structural Approaches to South India Studies*, pp. 17–42. Edited by H. M. Buck and G. E. Yocom. Chambersburg, PA: Wilson Books, 1974.
- Review of Philippe Stern, *Les Colonnes indiennes d’Ajantā et d’Ellora*. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94.4 (1974): 483–87.
- “Vijayanagar: City of Victory.” *Journal of Indian History* 51.1 (1973): 122–40.
- “Ajanta: A Brief History.” In *Aspects of Indian Art*, pp. 49–59. Edited by P. Pal. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972.
- “A Temple with Four Uchchakalpa (?) Doorways at Nāchnā Kūtharā.” In *Chhavi: Golden Jubilee Volume*, pp. 161–72. Banaras: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1971.
- “Ajantā’s Chronology: The Problem of Cave Eleven.” *Ars Orientalis* 7 (1968): 155–68.
- “Monuments of the Early Kalachuri Period.” *Journal of Indian History* 46.2.137 (1968): 263–70.
- “Ellora’s Earliest Phase.” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Benares* 1 (1967): 11–22.
- “History from Art History: Monuments of the Deccan.” In *Summaries of Papers, Organising Committee [of the] 26th International Congress of Orientalists, New Delhi, India*, pp. 242–43. Edited by R. N. Dandekar. 2 vols. New Delhi: A. K. Ghosh, 1964.
- “Ajantā and Chatotkacha: A Preliminary Analysis.” *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 135–55.
- “The J. M. Plumer Collection of Oriental Art.” *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963): 337–39.
- “India and Art History.” *The Fulbright Newsletter* 9.4 (1962): 1–2.
- “Indian Art in the Teaching of Indian Civilization.” In *Introducing India in Liberal Education*, pp. 165–78. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.
- “On the Development of Early Buddhist Art in India.” *The Art Bulletin* 40.2 (1958): 95–104.
- “Rock-Cut Monuments of the Andhra Period: Their Style and Chronology.” Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1954.
- “Indian Folk Art: Orissan Painting.” *Institute of International Education News Bulletin* (December 1953): 15–19, 36.

Tribute Statements

COLLEAGUE AT MICHIGAN

WALTER SPINK CAME to the Department of the History of Art in 1961. Those were days, if not of wine and roses, of extraordinary development. It was a time when the department, along with area centers, was in a period of conscious expansion. Charles Sawyer was already in place giving to the Museum of Art increasing national significance, expanding collections (for which the Parker Fund was used to bolster Asian holdings), and heading vital museum training programs. The year before, on George Forsyth's invitation, I had arrived from Saint Louis to fill a vacant post in what was still broadly the Asian area. What better at that point than to convince both the department and the growing centers that my long-time friend of Cambridge and Brandeis experience was what we needed in Ann Arbor for scholarship and teaching in the arts of India and Southeast Asia?

It might be noted that Harvard's Jakob Rosenberg, who had just been a distinguished visiting professor at Michigan and returned to east of Worcester with praises of the program here, added his encouragement to a former student and friend. (Of course, we would have captured Walter anyway, but it helps to have powerful assistance.) There followed those years of the sixties under Marvin Eisenberg's focused and sensitive scholar-teaching direction as chair, when the area of Asian art—to say nothing of other appointments—received important attention. While Oleg Graber was well in place for the Islamic world, in mid-decade Calvin French was enlisted to give greater authority to the art of Japan. Subsequently, we were to add Virginia Kane, a second China appointment. Indeed, the department was to expand its coverage of Asia to a point when seven faculty members, on full or shared appointments, were offering courses on the arts of a great continent: east from the Mediterranean to the last unique expression of it on the island complex of Japan. In those periodic outside reviews that administrations appear to require, more often than not Michigan's focus on the arts of Asia elicited a "distinguished" evaluation.

While Walter, by undisguised self-admission, might be considered the antithesis of organizational man, he presented for us not only an authoritative voice

on Asia but a universal approach to the arts that shattered barriers between East and West, time present and time past. After all, it is in the nature of visible form more readily to scale those cultural walls so guarded by the linguistic enclosures of verbal form. Uncomfortable in the systematic coverage implied by "The Arts of Asia," he turned to an open-ended introduction: "Arts: Ideas: East: West." His Indian specialty slipped readily into instruction on Western prints and drawings, always with first-hand exposure to collections, dealers, and collectors. He was, however, open to all the arts. Special was his love of poetry, graced from early contact with Archibald MacLeish to later friendship with Robert Bly. It included the teaching of Yeats, and one might catch his personal suggestion that the greatest twentieth-century poem was Wallace Stevens's "Sunday Morning."

Given the glow of what the Chinese would define as his "true nature" (*xing*), it is perhaps inevitable that Walter would shine brightly well beyond the borders of academic Ann Arbor. Whether in concert, lecture, or scholarly gathering, floating down Michigan's rivers, exploring exhibitions, superintending quality photography and its distribution, or traveling the world, he ranged far beyond classroom walls. No need here to reiterate his love for "Mother India." Curiously, indeed dramatically, his burrowing into ancient caves became a tangible seal of his direct love for the visual. At Ajanta it was in what he could *see* from a humble door hinge or rocky fault to the carved and painted glory of Buddha's kingdom that he claimed, in a methodology worthy of a scientist, to read fifteen years of creative activity in the second half of the fifth century.

As you continue to glance through Walter's publications and read the warm and heartfelt remarks of those who came closest to his scholarly and personal aura, there can be little doubt that his place in our departmental constellation was as a bright star, someone of special presence, of international stature, and in his field a leader. □

RICHARD EDWARDS

IN PRAISE OF WALTER JĪ

WALTER SPINK IS, of course, best known for his work on Ajanta. He's recently referred to himself as obsessed by Ajanta, something

that those who know him will agree is not far from the mark. But Walter's impact on our field extends far beyond Ajanta, to something that too few know.

Back in the 1960s, the American Committee for South Asian Art (ACSAA), was just that: a committee. Its responsibility was policy advice for what was then the American Academy of Banaras, a visionary establishment that sought to bring to South Asia what our colleagues working in the Mediterranean had in the American Academy in Rome, the American Schools of Classical Studies, and the American Schools of Oriental Research. In large measure it achieved that goal, though now as part of the American Institute of Indian Studies. That transfer to AIIS left ACSAA an organization without a purpose.

It so happened, however, that Walter was president of ACSAA at the time, and it's hard to imagine Walter sitting by and allowing the organization to remain without direction. Under his leadership, then, ACSAA became a membership organization, the professional association of our field. Its newsletter, biennial meetings and symposia, and even its expanded perspective as represented in its new name (American Council for Southern Asian Art) all may be traced to Walter's leadership. ACSAA thrives today because of Walter's vision, and we, his beneficiaries, are much indebted to him. □

FREDERICK M. ASHER

HOMAGE TO A MODERN CAVE MAN

TO THE AVERAGE PERSON, the designation "cave man" conjures up images of an animal-skin garbed, hairy, apelike male carrying a club and dragging his female companion by the hair. But picture this instead. The cave man that I have in mind is more an Indiana Jones-type adventurer whose realm of exploration is the cave monuments of the Indian subcontinent. Wielding a camera as his weapon, this cave man wears his unflagging enthusiasm, love, and dedication to his scholarly quest as his characteristic garb. And far from needing to drag his companions by the hair, this cave man has led his followers by his path-breaking vision.

From his earliest work—his doctoral dissertation on the early caves of western India—and throughout

his entire career, Walter Spink has raised the level of expectations for work in the field. As the first researcher truly to explore the issues behind the creation of the western Indian caves, including the contributions and roles of individual artists and critical questions of chronology and patronage, Walter has offered new paradigms that have reconstructed the human history behind the caves' creation. The questions he has asked and the methods he has pursued have ensured that subsequent generations could never study the caves again without feeling the enormous impact of his scholarship. Walter's dedication to initiatives that serve the broader interests of the field is also well known. The founder and director of the ACSAA slide project, Walter relentlessly pursued his goal of providing the highest quality visual images for the classroom. For these, and all of his other contributions, we owe him a profound debt.

Beyond Walter's remarkable achievements as a scholar, teacher, and leader in the field, I have many warm personal memories of him. I met him for the first time at a scholarly conference while I was still a graduate student. As I entered the elevator at the conference hotel, this very cheerful and outgoing man extended his hand and said, "Hello, I'm Walter (pronounced Waltah) Spink." I was dumbfounded to find myself face to face with this famous individual, whom I knew only from his *Ajanta to Ellora* and other publications. Such an open-hearted gesture, I came to learn, was characteristic of this man's generous, unfettered spirit. Over the years, I have been fortunate to consider Walter one of my dearest friends, greatly admiring his warmth, brilliance, and wit. I have also treasured getting to know his wife, Nesta, and sharing many enjoyable times with both of them.

To those who have had the honor and privilege of knowing Walter Spink and the extraordinary body of scholarship he has created on the cave art of India, designating him as a cave man for our times is a highest form of compliment. But unlike the cave man of yore, this cave man could never symbolize a man behind the times. Further, unlike the wheel invented by his stone-age namesake, this cave man's wheel conjures up another image altogether. More like the wheel turned into motion by the Buddha when he preached his first sermon, the wheel turned into motion by Walter Spink is one that represents learning, knowledge, and truth.

To Walter, I offer my congratulations, my admiration, and my love. □

SUSAN L. HUNTINGTON

THE IMPORTANCE OF QUESTIONS

THERE ARE MANY THINGS to be said about the place held by Walter Spink in the study of Indian art, perhaps most especially with regard to his long-term studies of Ajanta. But I want to highlight an aspect that may not always seem apparent in his meticulous ruminations on patronage and dating at this Buddhist site. This is the way in which his humanness has informed the direction of his questions: his interest in what the people who actually worked at this site many centuries ago had to do. Such concerns are especially clear in a brief article, "Flaws in Buddhist Iconology," which appeared in the 1987 volume *Facets of Indian Art: A Symposium Held at the Victoria and Albert Museum* (edited by Robert Skelton, Andrew Topsfield, Susan Stronge, and Rosemary Crill). Spink uses examples from Ajanta to illustrate the role that artistic choice and specific production problems may have played in the appearance of seemingly anomalous iconographic details. As he notes, iconographic usage in Indian art is primarily understood in terms of textual prescriptions, current doctrine, and established convention. What such a perspective unfortunately does not take into account is the role of the artists, the persons who had to deliver the goods, so to speak.

Certainly categorizing images from a relevant textual source is an important aspect of the pursuit of understanding art objects, but too many studies chart the history of Buddhist art solely in this manner. Ironically such studies, which purport to be about the development of imagery, often provide simply a succession of one type replacing another with little or no reflection upon the ways in which such imagery emerged, changed, circulated, interacted, or otherwise developed, perhaps even independently from texts. Texts can be useful for understanding themes encountered in art (and may even have inspired such presentations), but images present such themes in an entirely different manner, in virtually a different language. What is still lacking in many studies of Buddhist art is not only a more thorough consideration of the complex relationships between texts and images but a more direct confrontation and consideration of the nature of art objects. This is a sustained concern in Walter Spink's work, providing us with examples of the fundamental importance of continually looking and asking questions.

This is not the place to review the limitations of

conflating meaning with iconographic identity, but it is important to note that this perspective creates a legacy that emphasizes the identity of something over the question of why something is the way it is. This has been a general problem in art historical studies of many traditions, not just Indian art. While it is increasingly recognized that form and content are not separate issues, the actual activities of artisans in the production of India's plethora of ancient religious art are still seldom considered. Thus Spink's observations on the way in which artists accommodated geological flaws as they sculpted Buddhist figures out of the specific material they encountered at Ajanta is noteworthy. Although he gives only a few examples, there are doubtless more, as well as more questions to be asked about how artists went about the actual tasks of creation. Even though the names of these individuals have not been preserved, the consideration of such questions can better acknowledge the particular abilities of those responsible for the creation of monuments and works that are certainly one of the wonders of India. □

JANICE LEOSHKO

SPINK ON WHEELS

MY MEMORIES of Walter Spink go back to my second year in India—1965—when I met an obsessive, kind, bubbling gentleman at the Foreigners' Registration Office in Pune. He was certainly the first Art Historian I'd ever met—of India or otherwise—and a model for that world of "seeing" that I was precipitously then beginning to enter. I remember giving him a lift back to his home on the boot of the Vespa I'd borrowed, then sharing conversation and tea, an honor for a man then so young and green in the field as I. Walter was in mid-A obsession—Ajanta as a measure of this man's long creative career. We still could talk of those other caves nearby at Bhaja, Karli, Bedsa, to my understanding of which his earlier work would soon contribute so much. But I met the man first, then his scholarship, and it was the man, then his scholarship, that could become a model.

I have another image of Walter, from a story he told me, dropping in a stony field near Bedsa to "play dead" when some local boys began tossing stones at his family.

I see his love of India and his love of family combined in that sacrifice, and humor too. It was a grand gesture and a small one, clever but wise, protective and self-deflating. In his career his commitment to preserving and understanding that world-class gorge at Ajanta, and all his vast scholarship on related aspects, has been like that act—putting his body of work on the line.

I also remember being at Ajanta one year when Walter was there with his students and I with my mother shortly after my father had died. He was going cave by cave, not in numerical order but as the sun moved. In those years the caves with paintings were being conserved, and only with special permission, much paperwork, and trips to Delhi could anyone be allowed to enter their halls. Walter, however, was a sprite in spirit and the spirit of Ajanta in fact, known to all the watchmen almost from their birth. He grandfathered my mother into his group, fabricating to them that she was one of his students—saving her her one chance of seeing this great legacy of world heritage, and under his remarkable guidance.

Over the years, Walter's repeated workshops and classes at Ajanta have educated generations of students, a few of them mine. I never myself have been able to be back in the caves when he was there in fact as in spirit. When my mother joined his lineage, the guards protecting the caves had protected their official responsibilities also by keeping me outside; I was a professional in their view and could come again with papers from Delhi. But if they thought I was not his student, how wrong they were. □

MICHAEL W. MEISTER

THE COW-HERDER GOES TO WASHINGTON

CHARLES LANG FREER could scarcely foresee that his generous bequest to the nation also included sponsoring graduate students in the Asian art program at the University of Michigan to participate in the great antiwar moratoriums in Washington, DC, in the early 1970s. This is how it happened:

An annual subsidized study-tour to the Freer Gal-

lery of Art from Ann Arbor was built into our M.A. program, but it was Walter who scheduled our trip to coincide with the demonstrations against the Viet Nam War. How our faculty-chaperone was selected from the other professors was a mystery, but the lot always fell to Walter, known on these trips as *in loco parentis Vākātakas*. (Other faculty surely realized that to be responsible for six or seven early-twenty-somethings was tantamount to a migraine.) And Walter himself would probably admit that these pilgrimages to Washington were valuable training for overseeing large student groups going to Ajanta, which happened much later.

At the Freer Gallery Walter forced the Indian specialists into the China and Japan rooms, and the East Asian graduate students were pushed to the Indian gallery to admire the exquisite Chola Parvati and the spectacular Gandhāran reliefs. His outspoken eclecticism was hardly endearing at the time, but we realized later that Walter's draw to all art has enriched us all.

The march followed on the next day, on a bitterly cold Saturday morning. We mingled with the hundreds of thousands of protesters from around the country, Walter herding us together effortlessly, ensuring that his charges from Michigan stayed close together. I recall someone wondering out loud if Walter was not a cow-herder from Gokula in his last life. The march suddenly lurched forward, and at this point our leader from the Deccan unfurled an enormous banner proclaiming: "Asian Art Historians from Michigan against the War." As super cool individualists, we were naturally horrified at this corny group activity that drew such loud attention to ourselves in spite of our desire to protest the war. But Walter reined us in behind the banner, insisting that each of us take a turn supporting the two poles. Bunched together marching behind our standard, Walter in the center, we might have been taken for our capital's first *rāsa līlā*. When we returned to Ann Arbor, the bombs of course were still falling over Southeast Asia, but our participation in the demonstration reinforced the connection between our scholarly lives and the everyday lives of Asians today. Decades have passed, and the construction dates of the Ajanta caves have faded for me, but our pilgrimage to Washington remains a significant part of my education. □

DONALD M. STADTNER

*Rock-cut Architecture
of Western India*

Tulja Leni and Kondivte

Caitya-gr̄has: A Structural Analysis

THE ROCK-CUT SANCTUARIES in western India are exemplified by three different types of excavations: *caitya-gr̄ha* (prayer hall), *vihāra* (monks' residence), and halls used as refectories and/or for other purposes. This article will define the typology of *caitya-gr̄has* and examine two unique and important examples of them in relation to examples at several contemporary sites.

The *caitya-gr̄ha* in its most conventional form consists of a prayer hall divided longitudinally by two colonnades into a nave and two side aisles. In the apse stands the stupa carved out of the natural rock. The side aisles and the apsidal ends were meant for circumambulation around the stupa, and the nave proper was provided for congregational worship. The apsidal *caitya-gr̄ha* in western India closely resembles a type of structure that was being evolved in Europe at about the same time, the Greco-Roman basilica,¹ which has been dealt with by other scholars.²

Six broad categories of *caitya-gr̄ha* are found in western India:

(1) The first and most common *caitya-gr̄ha* is apsidal in plan, with a colonnade in the nave and apse and the rock-cut stupa at the apsidal end. Its vaulted roof has either wooden or stone ribs. The side aisles provide the circumambulatory path. On the façade is an arch motif (*caitya-gavākṣa*). Numerous examples of this type exist at such sites as Bhaja, Kondane, Ajanta, and Pitalkhora.

(2) The second type has all the characteristics of the first one except that the apsidal interior is without the colonnade, and there thus does not seem to be any provision for circumambulation. (But circumambulation is possible even without pillars.) Such

caitya-gr̄has are found at Pitalkhora, Nadsur, and Junnar.

(3) The third type consists of a *caitya-gr̄ha* with a circular plan, having a stupa at the center, surrounded by pillars, and forming a circular path for circumambulation. It has a domical roof and a half-arched ceiling in the aisle. Tulja Leni *caitya-gr̄ha* is the solitary example of this class.

(4) The fourth type has a circular shrine with domical roof and a stupa in the center, without pillars but with a flat-roofed hall attached to it. Surviving examples are extremely rare, the only one of its kind being found at Kondivte.

(5) The fifth type has a circular shrine containing a monolithic stupa, with its stone *chattrāvali* (umbrella) attached to the flat roof. It has no pillars. Kanheri Caves 4 and 36 may be classed as this type. Small circular shrines of this type with or without roof are found at Bhaja, Bedsa, and Induri in the Pune district. These have been identified as votive stupas because some bear votive inscriptions.

(6) The sixth type consists of quadrilateral or quadrangular halls/shrines, with the stupa at the back and its umbrella either attached to the roof or detached from it. In the course of time an antechamber in front of the stupa shrine and cells within the *caitya* complex were also added. Examples of this class are numerous in western India, with several variations,³ for example, at Junnar, Mahad, Kuda, Shirval, Wai, Karad, and Pohala.

In the first four types, the sockets over the railing (*harmikā*) show that a wooden umbrella was erected over the stupa, at least in the finished examples. The Karli *caitya-gr̄ha* is the only surviving example of this type, while the Bedsa *caitya*'s *danda*



FIG. 1.
Kondane, caitya wood-work toothing process.

(staff) over the *harmikā* suggests its existence. Some time in the late first and early second century A.D. the wooden umbrella was replaced by a stone one, as is the case with the flat-roofed *caitya-grhas* (types 5 and 6 above).

The craftsmen who produced *caitya-grhas* and *vihāras* were also trained and engaged in methods of constructing wooden architecture. This explains the substantial number of wood structures attached to both the exterior and interior surfaces, which are evident from the numerous mortises used for fixing wooden insets (or appendages). In fact, in a few notable examples, teak beams are still to be seen in the rock-cut vaulted roofs at Bhaja, Karli, and Kondane.

Wood of good quality was certainly available in the nearby forests, but the selection of sturdy seasoned wood must have been the job of a skilled carpenter. The basic design governing the method of support when the wood is attached to the roof and side walls is noteworthy. The vertical ends or bases

of rafters were placed in grooves on a projected triforium over the pillars, while the rafters and cross beams on the vaulted roof were joined by the "tooothing" method between the two pieces (fig. 1). On the wooden screen at the front two carved rafters were joined at certain intervals by means of "tie beams" in order to strengthen the upper and lower beams. The use of wood for decorative or functional purposes is not, however, a suitable criterion for establishing a chronological sequence of the monuments, for it is known that craftsmen often used wood in the *caityas* of the early phase, as at Pitalkhora, Ajanta, Bhaja, and Kondane, as well as in the late phase monuments of Karli, Bedsa, Kanheri, and others. But the presence of wood, like the use of sloping doorways and pillars, certainly suggests wooden prototypes, in some cases actually reproducing in considerable detail certain technical aspects of contemporary wooden construction.

Hence, stylistic considerations will be the basis for framing a chronological sequence and probable dates for the Tulja Leni and Kondivte *caitya-grhas*. The focus will be mainly on architecture, with particular reference to plans, pillar forms, stupa types, decorative motifs, and figure sculpture. Epigraphic evidence will also be considered. Many of the decorative motifs of these caves have parallels in the structural monuments at Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, and so on. While considering motifs in the earlier caves at Junnar, we shall describe in brief their earlier and later development at other related sites. In the process, Davidson's remark that "Traditional craftsmen perpetuate ancient forms while at the same time innovators adopt the new"⁴ will be amply proven. This analysis will also show how certain early motifs lingered for a considerable period of time with slight variations. Yet they generally disappear in due course, so that motifs and patterns of the early period hardly ever appear in the later monuments.

On stylistic considerations, the Tulja Leni group, particularly *caitya-grha 3*, appears to be the earliest among all the cave groups at Junnar. This will first be described in brief, then compared with other cave sites in the region and elsewhere in order to fix their probable sequence and chronology.

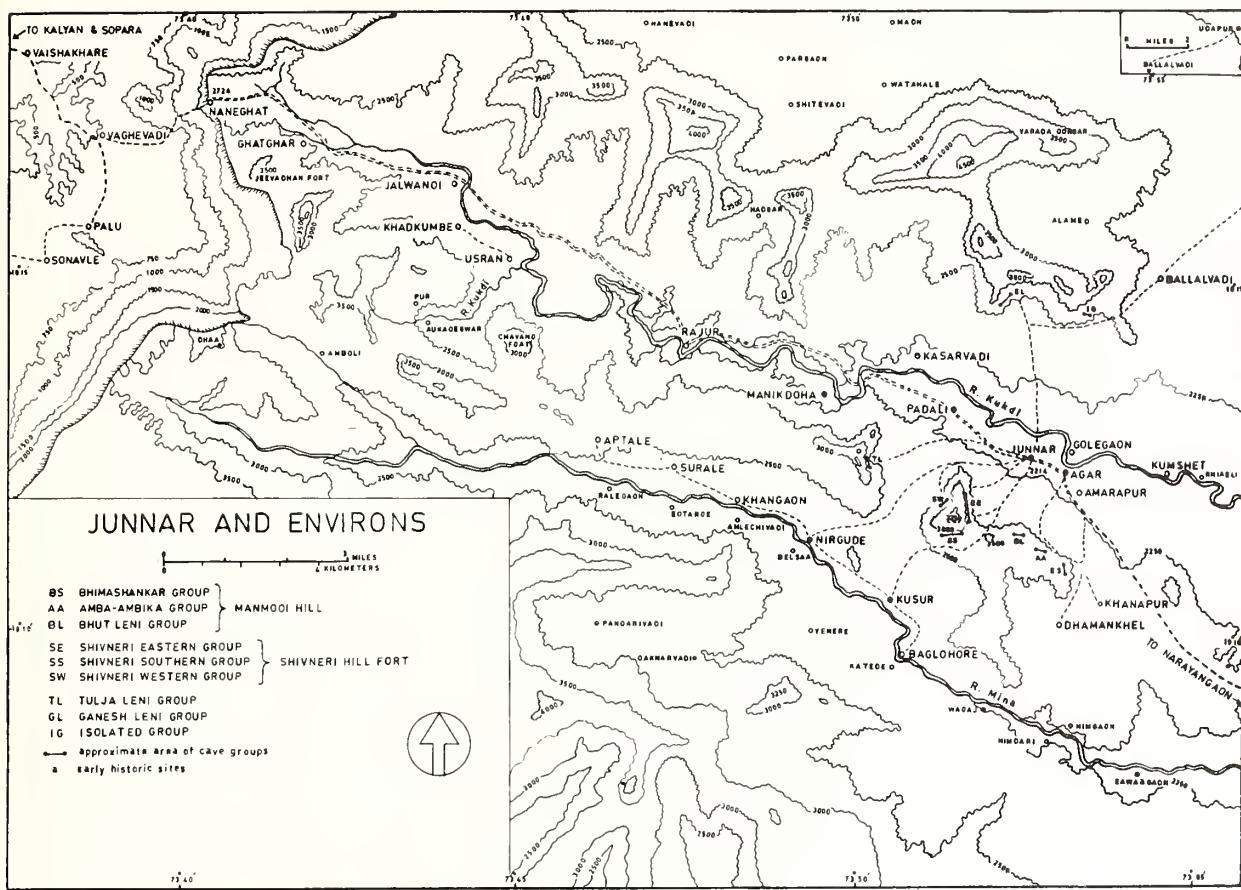


FIG. 2.

Contour map of Junnar cave sites.

TULJA LENI, CAITYA-GRHA 3

Tulja Leni is a group of thirteen caves located about 3.5 kilometers west of Junnar town (see fig. 2). In general, the caves face north by northeast.⁵ *Caitya-grha* 3 is of particular interest⁶ as it is the most typical of the circular shrines and the only one of its kind in western India (figs. 3-4). Its interior diameter is 8.23 meters. In the center is a plain stupa (2.59 meters in diameter), with a low drum (1.32 meters high) and an elongated dome (*anda*) 1.67 meters high, the total height being 3 meters. It is surrounded by twelve octagonal pillars, each 3.35 meters high, without a base or a capital, being broad at the base and tapering upward. The total height of the cave from floor to dome is about 7.62 meters. An aisle with a circumambulatory path, 1.07 meters wide, runs between the pillars and the circular wall (fig. 5), with a

half-arched roof that was once embellished with wooden ribs and painting (fig. 6). The ceiling over the stupa is domical (fig. 7); it too was embellished with wooden beams (now lost), supported vertically by means of notches carved on the circular entablature. The ridge supporting the wooden ribs, about 12 cm in depth, projects over the entablature.

The façade of *caitya-grha* 3, particularly its top portion, is completely ruined. It is, therefore, difficult to determine whether it contained the typical large *caitya-gavākṣa*, as at Bhaja and Kondane. There are indications, however, that it had a door, possibly flanked by windows on either side. On the left wall at the entrance is a vertical groove with notches at the top and base, about 2.13 meters high and 48 cm from the floor. The two central pillars near the entrance have grooves cut all along the eight faces of the pillar on their top, indicating that a cross beam

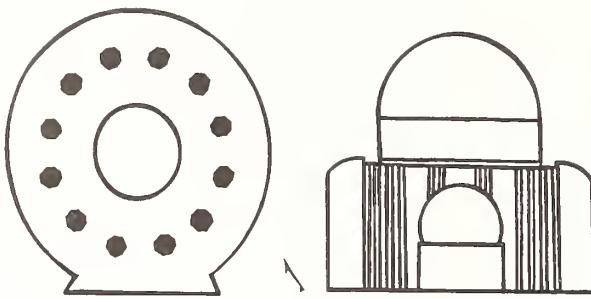


FIG. 3.
Junnar, *Tulja Leni* caitya 3, ground plan and section.

FIG. 5.
Junnar, *Tulja Leni* caitya 3,
interior,
circular circum-
ambulatory
passage.



was tied at this point. Below this level, the central door was probably fixed (see fig. 4). The octagonal pillars were once painted, but now traces of painting remain only on one pillar. It depicts female heads with ornaments and several body contours, which exhibit general similarities with the paintings on the right wall of *caitya-grha* 10 at Ajanta. These paintings are executed on the smooth surface of the octagonal shafts over a thin mud plaster covered with a coating of lime plaster.⁷ The domical roof in the center and the side aisle walls were also once painted. The remains of thick mud plaster still exist, particularly on the side aisle ceiling, and a lotus medallion is seen on a darkened surface (fig. 8). The chiseling in this area is extremely rough; therefore thick mud plaster was applied first, over which the paintings were executed.

On the basis of detailed comparisons of the



FIG. 4.
Junnar, *Tulja Leni* caitya 3, general view.



FIG. 6.
Junnar, *Tulja Leni* caitya 3, interior, ceiling with
painted remains and wood-work markings.

Tulja Leni caitya-grha 3 with the related sites of Pitalkhora 3, Bhaja, Kondane, and Ajanta 10, it is surmised that *Tulja Leni caitya-grha* 3 dates from ca. 65–53 B.C.⁸

OTHER SITES COMPARED TO TULJA LENI

Circular shrines or buildings have often been depicted in the reliefs at Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati, and Nagarjunakonda. Sarkar has given the probable origin of this type and its spread in India, citing several examples.⁹ He and many other scholars have compared the *Tulja caitya* with the structural circular temple at Bairat in Rajasthan, the rock-cut circular *caitya* at Guntupali in Andhra Pradesh, the Lomāś Rṣi cave in the Barabar hills near Gaya in Bihar, and



FIG. 7.
Junnar, *Tulja Leni* caitya 3, interior, domical roof.

the Kondivte *caitya* near Mumbai in Maharashtra. These sites will be examined briefly in order to place the Tulja and Kondivte *caityas* as precisely as possible in terms of date and style.

TULJA AND BAIRAT: CAITYAS

The Bairat *caitya*, supposed to have been built during Aśoka's reign, may have gone through several modifications in the course of time, as suggested by Sahni.¹⁰ He observed that, "during the three centuries this establishment was in existence, it has been renovated or rebuilt two or three times," and "all this rebuilding has been done on earlier foundations."¹¹ The discovery of punch-marked and Indo-Greek coins together with other antiquities reported by Sahni suggests the temple existed until the middle of the first century A.D. The excavations of Sahni provide the following information relevant to a comparison with the Tulja *caitya-grha*.¹²

The Bairat circular chamber, with its octagonal wooden columns, has an inner diameter of 8.28 meters, which is almost identical with that of Tulja. Yet in spite of this similarity in size, which might well be coincidental, it is not possible to give identical dates, partly because the Bairat temple has gone through several modifications since Aśoka's time and particularly because of the perishable nature of its

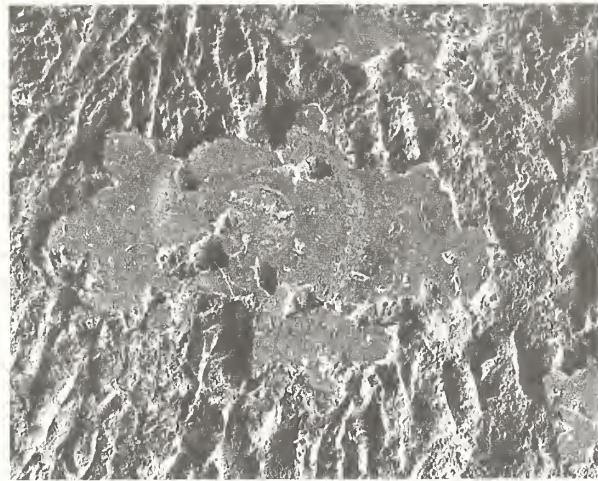


FIG. 8.
Junnar, *Tulja Leni* caitya 3, interior, painted remains with lotus medallion.

construction material. Further, it should be noted that none of Aśoka's pillars is octagonal, which again suggests a later date for the Bairat temple.¹³ The fact that the Bairat pillars are fluted would seem to support this view; but those in the Tulja Leni *caitya*, though similarly placed, are much more severe in form. Hence, it is not possible to trace the origin of the Tulja, and relate its date, to Bairat.

TULJA AND GUNTUPALLI: CAITYAS

The Guntupalli rock-cut circular *caitya* in Andhra Pradesh¹⁴ is distinctly different, in spite of certain similarities of plan, from the Tulja *caitya-grha*. The Guntupalli shrine, which is much smaller in size (5.48 meters in diameter and 4.50 meters in height), has a stupa that occupies more than half of the entire chamber and is quite different, indeed rather odd, in proportions. Furthermore, the ribs of Guntupalli are carved in stone, while those of the Tulja *caitya* were of wood. The absence of the circle of pillars, and the presence of a rectangular vestibule at the entrance, also constitute marked differences compared to the Tulja *caitya*. Although there is no evidence of the *caitya* arch on the façade at Tulja, it is present at Guntupalli in a definite shape that resembles the Lomas Rishi façade, while in the latter it is primitive in character with a finial at the apex. The Lomāś Rṣi



FIG. 9.
Barabar Hills, Lomāś Rṣi cave, façade arch-finial,
detail.

finial type (fig. 9) is to be seen in some of the reliefs at Bharhut, Sanchi, and Amaravati but is absent in western Indian caves.

Longhurst dates the Guntupalli *chaitya* to ca. 200 B.C., while other scholars place it “somewhere in the course of the evolution from the Aśokan caves to the typical western *chaitya*,”¹⁵ a date that would hardly suit the Tulja *caitya*. Sarkar opines that “the Guntupalli cave practically copied the primitive circular huts of Andhra Pradesh,”¹⁶ indicating its origin in that region, which seems logical. In an overall sequence of these types, none of the above arguments seems sufficient to bring the Guntupalli *caitya* close in date to Tulja.

TULJA AND LOMĀŚ RŚI

28

The ground plans of Lomāś Rṣi and Sudāma caves in the Barabar Hills in Bihar bear little resemblance

to that of the Tulja, for the latter is just one circular unit, whereas the former are two-chambered. The comparisons by earlier scholars are based mainly on the circular plans and domical roofs on the rear and rectangular halls on the front. Determining the chronological sequences and dating of the Barabar group of caves is easier, as the Maurya epigraphic evidence is adequate for those groups.¹⁷

TULJA AND KONDIVTE: CAITYAS

The Kondivte rock-cut caves are located 12.8 kilometers south of the Kanheri caves near present-day Mumbai (see fig. 10). There are eighteen excavations in all, three on the west and fifteen on the east of a hill of no great height. In this small group the *caitya* under consideration is number 9.

The caves at Kondivte are carved in an arm of the main range that projects forth in the north-south direction. The ridge of the arm is about nine meters higher than the surrounding area, while its sides slope to 4.50 meters. Another feature of interest is that the arm slopes more in the southern direction—that is, as it moves away from the main hill (see fig. 11). This configuration of the site selected for the cutting of the caves has imparted certain peculiarities to the *caitya*.

From the entrance to the back wall of the *caitya*, the depth or length is 12.19 meters. This is divided in two parts, a quadrangular hall and a circular shrine. The height of the ceiling is not uniform—it continues to increase as the cave progresses inward. The height of the hall near the entrance is 2.8 meters, whereas it is 3.05 meters near the shrine. The ceiling of the *caitya* is 4.57 meters from its floor. Thus, it appears that the limited height available to the architect led him to abandon the apsidal-vaulted scheme and adopt a two-chamber plan (see fig. 11). In all probability this was the reason for its present form, which makes it unique in western India. Should we then consider the Kondivte *caitya-grha* as an “innovation” or a variation of the traditional type? Or was this the beginning of a new type of “flat-roofed” *caitya-grha* excavated in the intervening period, without bothering about the nonfunctional or cumbersome vaulted roof? Those are the problems that need to be investigated.

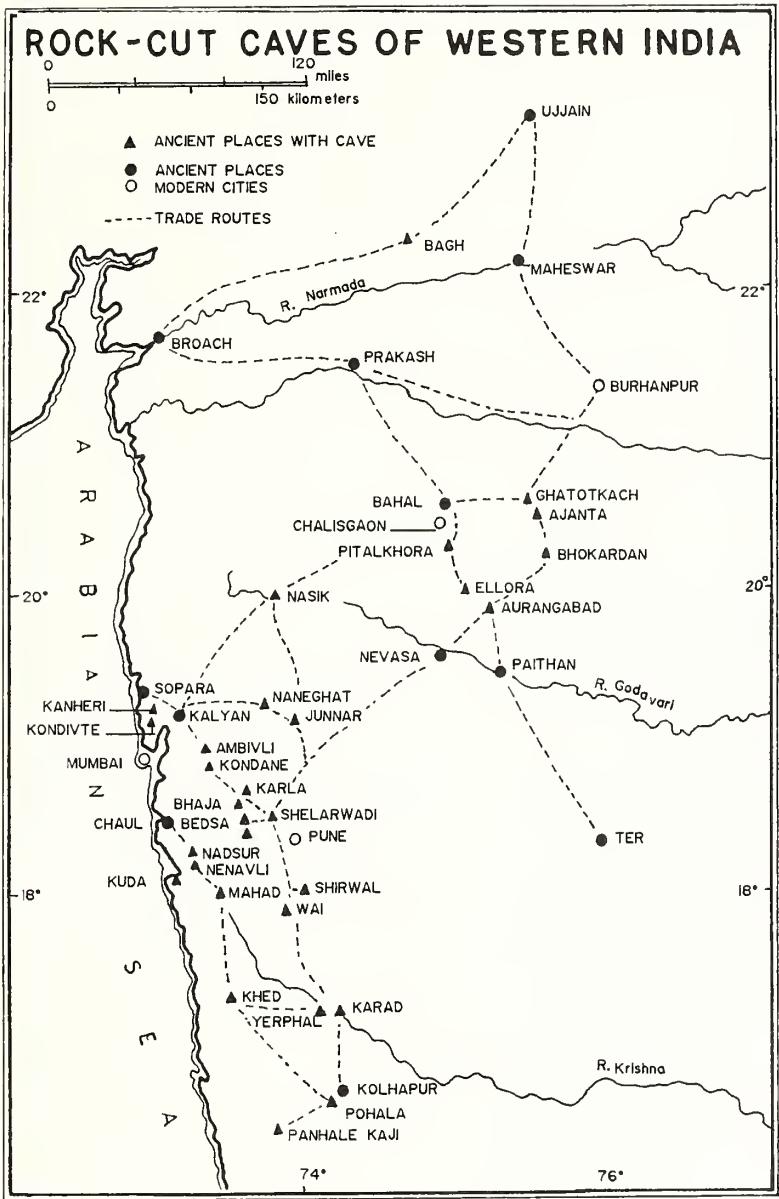


FIG. 10.
Map of cave sites in western India.

Other noteworthy features of the cave are:

a) The circular shrine's entrance door is not sloping upward like the one at Lomas R̄ṣi. The sides or the jambs of the Kondivte door are perpendicular and parallel to each other (figs. 12–13). These peculiarities between the two caves strongly suggest a late date for the Kondivte *caitya*.

b) The provision of latticed windows on either side of the door of the circular shrine, so as to illuminate the interior circumambulatory passage, suggests an innovation during this period.

c) The drum of the stupa is proportionately taller than the hemispherical dome. A *vedikā* is carved on

the upper edge of the drum (see fig. 11). Scholars consider these features to be a later development.

d) There is a hole on top of the partly broken *harmikā*, which was meant for the shaft of the umbrella.¹⁸

e) The adjoining cave seen in the ground plan (see fig. 11) seems to be late and contemporary with the *caitya*. Such types of caves are numerous at Junnar, Kanheri, etc.

All these considerations cumulatively suggest that the Kondivte *caitya* is later than the Tulja Leni *caitya*. This hypothesis is further confirmed by the dedicatory inscription engraved on a specially

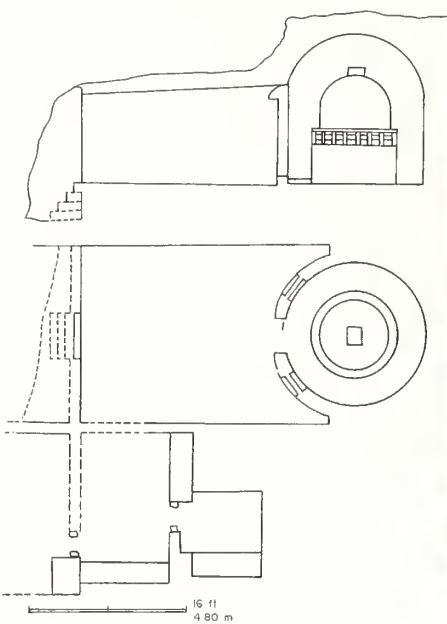


FIG. 11.
*Kondivte, caitya 9, ground plan, section
and adjoining vihāra.*



FIG. 12 (RIGHT ABOVE).
Kondivte, caitya 9, general view.



FIG. 13 (RIGHT).
Kondivte, caitya 9, interior view.

prepared smooth surface above the right-side lattice window (fig. 14). Its paleography indicates that it should be placed around the second century A.D.¹⁹ The inscription at Kondivte belongs to the same date as the excavation of the cave. There is no reason to believe that it was carved in a later period, for hundreds of analogous inscriptions at such sites as Nasik, Junnar, and Kanheri are also engraved on well-prepared smooth panels. Its facsimile (fig. 15) is given by F. Wilford,²⁰ but his reading and translation are vague.

Evidently, this cave has not been properly studied. The photograph here (fig. 14) was taken by the

author after removing the encrustation. A tentative reading follows:

*Text: Pachikamaye vathavasa bramhanasa
gotamasa gotrasa penalasa deyadhma viharo
sabhatukasa*

Translation: (This) vihāra is the meritorious gift of Peñala (Sk. Paiñyala), a brahman of the Gautama gotra, who lives in Pachikamaya, together with his brothers (or brothers and sisters).

Characters: Brāhmī of the late second century A.D.

Language: Prakrit influenced by Sanskrit

Noteworthy paleographical features:

1. The head mark is occasionally seen.

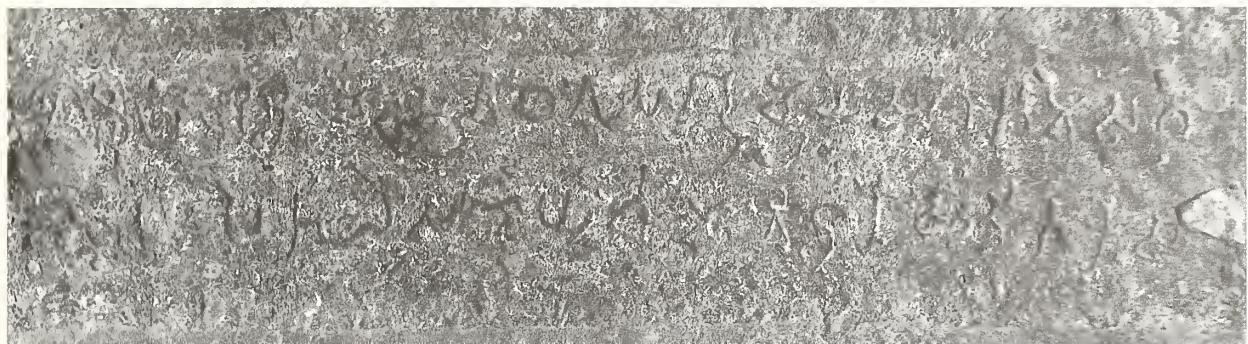


FIG. 14.
Kondivte, caitya 9, inscription in two lines over the lattice window.

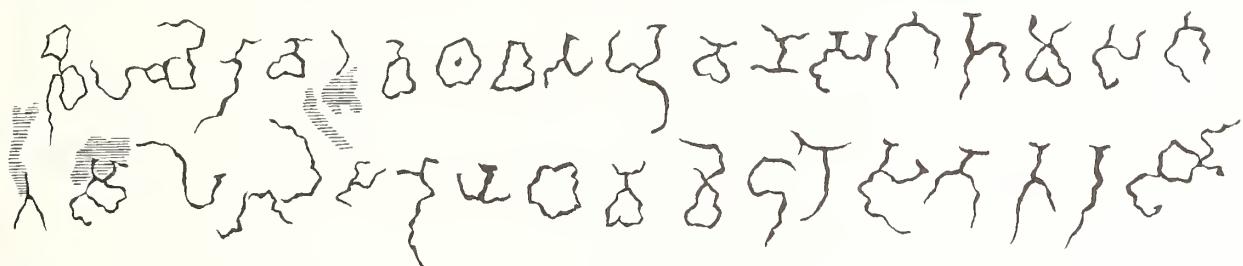


FIG. 15.
After F. Wilford's eye copy of Kondivte inscription, published in Asiatic Researches 5 (Loudon, 1799): pl. V under Salsette.

2. The curves characterize the verticals.
3. The ornamental flourishes are added to the medial vowels.
4. Triangular *dha*.
5. Angular *da*.

Important aspects: Mention of a Brahmanic gotra, Gautama. The personal name Peñala (Sk. Pañyala) seems to be unusual. The word *vihāra* used for this *caitya* is not unusual. Such variations also occur at Junnar in Amba-Ambika *caitya-grha* 26, which is mentioned in the inscription referring to it as *Gidha-vihāra*.

The place name Pachikamaya in the inscription cannot be properly identified. It may be Pachakoli, which is about 3 kilometers east of Kondivte caves,²¹ not far from Vehar and Pavai lakes.

Later, Pt. Bhagavanlal Indraji gave his reading,²² which is almost identical to ours, except that the proper name he reads as Pitulasa, and he omits the Sanskritized characters *bra* in *brahmaṇa* and *tra* in *gotra*. □

Notes

This paper is presented to Professor Walter M. Spink in honor of his retirement and his research on the Ajanta caves. Its contents are revised from chapter 4 of my Ph.D. thesis, "Rock-cut Cave Temples at Junnar: An Integrated Study" (University of Poona, India, 1980). See also my article, "A Little-known Caitya Hall at Junnar," *Ars Orientalis* 16 (1987): 103–16. All photos and drawings accompanying this article are by me.

1. James Ferguson and James Burgess, *Cave Temples of India* (Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corp., 1969), 31; Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, 4th ed. (Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala, 1959), 20; and H. Sarkar, *Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharial, 1966), 54, no. 2.

2. Sarkar, *Early Buddhist Architecture*, 25–48. See also Vidya Dehejia, *Early Buddhist Rock Temples: A Chronology* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1972), 74, no. 3.

3. Dehejia, *Early Buddhist Rock Temples*, table 10.

4. J. LeRoy Davidson, "Begram Ivories and Indian Stones," *Marg* 24 (1971): 31–45 and plates. See also his article, "Begram Ivories and Early Indian Sculpture: A Reconsideration of

Dates," in *Aspects of Indian Art*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 1–14.

5. The new numbers given to the caves are those that have been assigned by the Archaeological Survey of India South-Western Circle, Aurangabad Deccan.

6. The other circular shrines noted earlier are different in style and thus not parallel with the Tulja *caitya-grha* as such.

7. V. Mishra, "A Unique Painting in Tulja Caves at Padali (Junnar)," *Journal of Indian History* 38 (1960): 189–90 and plates.

8. See Vasant, "Rock-cut Cave Temples at Junnar," chapter 4.

9. Sarkar, *Early Buddhist Architecture*, 25–29.

10. Daya Ram Sahni, *Archaeological Remains and Excavations at Bairat* (Jaipur, n.d.), 1–40.

11. Sahni, *Archaeological Remains*, 21.

12. For the ground plan of Bairat temple, see Sarkar, *Early Buddhist Architecture*, fig. 7; and for the conjectural restoration, Brown, *Indian Architecture*, pl. VI.

13. In my opinion, the first octagonal pillar of the early period appears to be that of Heliodorus at Vidisha in Madhya Pradesh. Nearly half of the pillar is octagonal. The upper half was hewn into sixteen and thirty-two facets and finally into the round. See John Irwin, "The Heliodorus Pillar: A Fresh Appraisal," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* (December 1974), 5, figs. 8 and 12.

14. A. H. Longhurst, "The Buddhist Monuments at Guntu-

palli," *Annual Report of Archaeology Department, Southern Circle* (Madras, 1917), 30–32 and plates. For the ceiling and façade photos, see Dehejia, *Early Buddhist Rock Temples*, pls. 3–4; and for the section, see Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments* (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1971), fig. 14.

15. Longhurst, "Buddhist Monuments," 30–32; Dehejia, *Early Buddhist Rock Temples*, 27.

16. Sarkar, *Early Buddhist Architecture*, 27.

17. For an excellent study of the Barabar group caves, see John C. Huntington, "Lomas Rishi: Another Look," *Archives of Asian Art* 28 (1974–75): 34–56, figs. 1–26. In this connection it is interesting to observe that Fergusson notes the entire thickness of the rooftop of the Lomas Rsi to be only 9 to 10 inches; see *Cave Temples of India*, 43, no. 1.

18. There are two channels diagonally cut through the cracks on the sides of the circular wall of the shrine. During the monsoon rain water is collected and diverted along the side walls of the front hall. This appears to be an ancient conservation measure.

19. Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, 163. In Luders' List no. 1035, Kondivite inscription is published under Mahakal cave inscription. F. Wilford's plate cited above appears to be an eye-copy sketch.

20. *Asiatic Researches* 5 (London, 1799): pl. V under Salsette.

21. See topographical sheet of *Survey of India* (1924), no. 47 A/16.

22. See *Gazetteers of the Bombay Presidency*, vol. 14 (1882), 206.

The Dharmacakramudrā

Variant at Ajanta:

An Iconological Study

This article is dedicated with profound affection to my dear friend Walter M. Spink. Walter's inspiration, intelligence, and insight continue to be a guiding light for all privileged enough to know him. More importantly, his kindness, humanity, and love have made all who have been touched by his presence better for the experience—a true Bodhisattva: OM NAMO WALTERSATTVA HŪṂ

DESPITE BELONGING TO ONE of the most popular and well-studied sites in South Asia, the overriding iconography of the Ajanta caves has continued to elude thorough understanding, particularly of its shrine images. Survival of late fifth-century paintings at the site has inspired scholars such as Yazdani,¹ Schlingloff,² and others to conduct iconographic studies of the murals and shed light on the *Jātaka* tales, which illustrate the perfections of a bodhisattva. But the main shrine images have received far less attention despite being the *ārya*, or emanating source, from which all other iconographic elements in any given cave emanate. As such, the shrine figures are fundamental to the proper understanding of the overall iconography and iconology of the caves. The most common type of shrine image at the site is a seated Buddha making a variant of the *Dharmacakramudrā*, or the gesture of turning the Wheel of the Dharma. The central Buddha is flanked by two attending bodhisattvas. This article will focus on this image type and its Buddhistological ramifications.

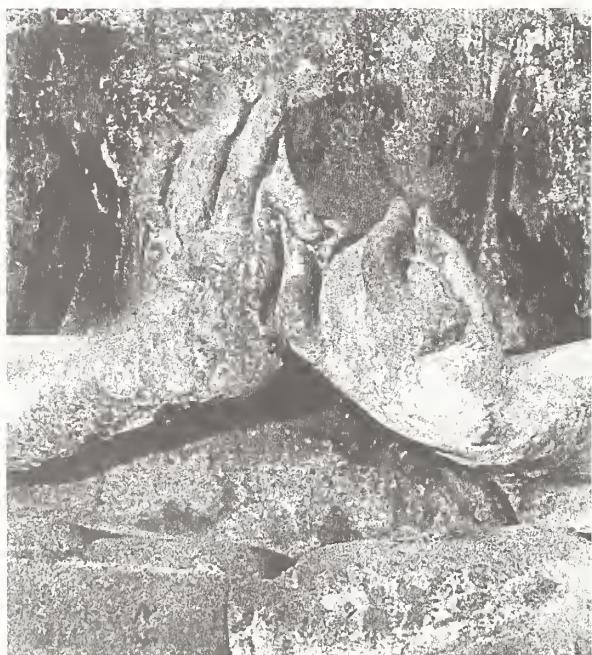
The basic shrine image type at Ajanta is exemplified in Cave 4 (fig. 1). The shrine houses an image of a Buddha seated in *vajraprayaṅkāsana* (*vajra-*

throne-sitting [posture]) on a simple Mt. Meru platform. To the Buddha's right stands the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara dressed as a Brahmin ascetic with matted locks and an antelope-skin meditation mat tied across his chest. In his right hand, he holds his primary attribute, the *pn̄ḍarika* (white lotus). To the Buddha's left is the Bodhisattva Vajrapani holding his primary attribute, the *vajra*, in his left hand. Across the bottom of the composition are donor figures on either side of a pair of antelope that flank a central *Dharmacakra*, seen with the edge facing the viewer. Two *mālādhara*s (flower garland bearers) hover above the Buddha and the bodhisattvas.

A distinct variant of the *Dharmacakramudrā* (fig. 2), displayed by the Buddha figure in Cave 4, appears for the first time in the fifth-century caves at Ajanta. The right hand is held in a *vitarkamudrā*-like gesture, in front of the chest. The left hand clutches the hem of the robe between the thumb and the first three fingers, while the fourth, or little finger, points to the circle formed by the touching fingers of the right hand. More specifically, the little finger of the left hand lies alongside the thumb of the right hand, and the tips of the two digits are capped by the forefinger of the proper right hand.³ The three fingers come together at precisely the point where the conceptual center of the body is located in Buddhist theory. This center is the seat of the heart-mind, the core essence that transforms an individual into a Buddha. The frequent and unchanging occurrence of this mudra throughout the caves of western India suggests that it was an established iconographic convention based on a conservative tradition or teaching.

FIG. 1.

*Shrine image of
Cave 4, Ajanta,
Maharashtra,
India, Vākāṭaka
period, ca. late fifth
century.*



The mudra is particularly important as it provides a more specific attribution for the Cave 4 Buddha figure, previously overlooked in scholarship. It identifies the Buddha as Śākyamuni/Vairocana in Akaniṣṭa Heaven. Buddha Vairocana, and Śākyamuni as Vairocana, are well-established notions by the late fifth century. Two texts, the *Avataṃśakasūtra* and the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpasūtra*, discuss the Buddha Vairocana as the manifestation of the Buddhist Dharma. He is also the personification of the state of nirvana, or absolute cessation, but is said to preside physically over Akaniṣṭa, the highest of the form realms in the Mt. Meru system. The texts also imply that he is the reification of the *Dharmakāya*,⁴ or the body of the Dharma. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, all

FIG. 2.

*Detail of the variant Dharmacakramudrā displayed
by the shrine Buddha image of Cave 4 in fig. 1.*



FIG. 3.

Buddha displaying standard Dharmacakramudrā, Saruath, Uttar Pradesh, India, Gupta period, late fifth century, sandstone. Saruath Site Museum, Saruath.

mānuṣi Buddhas are axiomatically representations of the Dharma, and thereby aspects of Vairocana. Therefore, it is not surprising that Śākyamuni is conflated with Vairocana and is understood to teach several sutras as simply Vairocana, as Śākyamuni/Vairocana, or as Śākyamuni in his Vairocana robes.⁵

Two primary iconographic features allow the identification of the image in Cave 4 as Śākyamuni/Vairocana. They are: 1) the attending bodhisattvas and 2) the variant *Dharmacakramudrā* itself. In the *Mañjuśrimūlakalpasūtra* and the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi are described as attending Śākyamuni/Vairocana as he appears in Akaniṣṭa Heaven. It is generally maintained that the two texts in question postdate the Ajanta image. While the extant recensions

may be dated to after the fifth century, both texts are obvious compilations of complex bodies of material from many sources that undoubtedly developed over an extended period. Thus, in the conservative environment of Indic Buddhism, it is not surprising that “precursors” to the present versions of the text may have existed, giving rise to the iconography at sites like the Ajanta caves.

Second, the mudra too points to the identification of the Buddha as Śākyamuni/Vairocana. While the gesture displayed by the Buddha image in Cave 4 is generally regarded as the standard *Dharmacakramudrā*, a closer examination reveals that it is a distinct variation. Commonly, the *Dharmacakramudrā* (fig. 3) involves the forefinger and thumb of the proper right hand forming a circle in a *vitarkamudrā*-

FIG. 4.
Buddha from Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, India, Gupta period, ca. 475, sandstone. Sarnath Site Museum, Sarnath.



FIG. 5.
Detail of mudra displayed by the Buddha from Sarnath in fig. 4.



like gesture. The forefinger of the proper left hand points to, or touches, the circle made by the digits of the right hand. In the Ajanta variant, the little finger, as opposed to the forefinger, of the left hand points to the circle made by the fingers of the right. Similarly, other variants of the *Dharmacakramudrā* include each finger of the left hand pointing to the *vitarkamudrā*-like gesture of the right hand. For example, the great fifth-century Buddha at Sarnath (fig. 4) points to the circle with the middle finger. This seems to suggest a sequential progression of some sort. Indeed, in Buddhist practice, it is common that sequential aspects of a meditation or teaching are counted on fingers.⁶ So what then do the variants of the *Dharmacakramudrā* communicate?

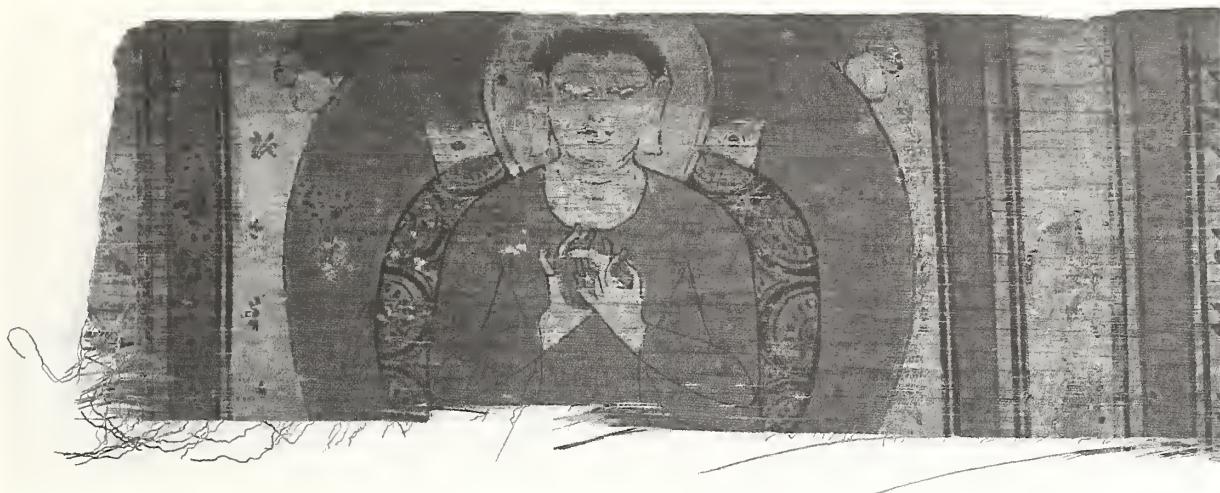


FIG. 6.

Buddha displaying the Dharmacakramudrā with his ring, or third, finger pointing to the vitarkamudrā-like gesture, detail of a folio from a Prajñāpāramitā manuscript, Bihar, India, Pāla period, ca. 1025, opaque watercolor on palu leaf. Purchased with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim and Dr. and Mrs. Pratapaditya Pal, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.86.185b.

An early fifth-century development in Chinese Buddhist thought may shed light on what probably occurred within the Indic Buddhist context as well. Zhiyi, the founder of the Tian Tai sect of Buddhism in China, presumed that there were different periods of the teaching of the Dharma by Śākyamuni. He divided Śākyamuni's teachings into five distinct categories.⁷ According to Zhiyi's division, Śākyamuni's first teaching took place not at the so-called "Deer Park" near Varanasi but in Akaniṣṭa Heaven. Immediately after the defeat of Māra resulting in the enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, Śākyamuni rose to Akaniṣṭa and, as Vairocana or adorned in "Vairocana robes," gave the profound description of the Dharma realm.

According to Zhiyi, the teaching that took place at the Deer Park near Varanasi was the second propagation. He expressly states that "[After the teaching in Akaniṣṭa, Śākyamuni] traveled to the Deer Park. There he took off his radiant Vairocana robes and put on . . . worn dusty robes."⁸ It was here that Śākyamuni spoke to the five ascetics and commenced his ministry. Subsequently, Zhiyi notes three other teaching phases, which include an esoteric or "secret" phase and a phase in which the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*, a *Vaipūlya* (extended) sutra of primary importance in China, came about.

Given the close religious ties between China and

India around the fourth and fifth centuries, it is reasonable to assume that a similar classification system existed on the subcontinent as well. This speculation is further corroborated through examining extant Buddhist sculpture. While the specifics of an Indic classification are unknown, the *Dharmacakraṇudrā* displayed by the fifth-century Buddha image from Sarnath (fig. 5) provides a significant clue. Instead of the standard gesture with the forefinger of the proper left hand pointing to the *vitarkamudrā*-like gesture of the proper right hand, the Sarnath Buddha points to the *vitarkamudrā*-like gesture with the middle, or second, finger. This may indeed be a reference to the second teaching propounded by the Buddha Śākyamuni at Sarnath, similar to Zhiyi's classification.

Further, a Pāla dynasty Buddha image on a palm-leaf manuscript from the Bihar area of eastern India (fig. 6) displays the *Dharmacakramudrā* with his ring, or third, finger pointing to the *vitarkamudrā*-like gesture. This may again refer to a specific teaching, thereby supporting the probability of an Indic classification system similar in concept to that of Zhiyi. Given the standard semiotics of mudra as symbolic language, it is highly probable that each finger refers to a particular category of teachings. Unfortunately, we have no direct information regarding the details of the classification system in South Asia that

correlates precisely to the images discussed. Given the relatively early dates of these images, it is obvious that the discourse classifying different teachings had occurred by the late fourth or early fifth century.

The question of what the variant mudra at Ajanta specifically means remains to be addressed. The answer seems to relate directly to the categorization of teachings. In all known Indic Buddhist methodology classification systems, the Tantras, being the most complex, are enumerated at the end of any given sequence. It is therefore probable that the little finger pointing to the *vitarkamndrā*-like gesture in the Ajanta variant refers to Tantric teachings. Further, images from the nearby site of Aurangabad, and dating from only a few decades later, clearly indicate that Tantric practices of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* and related texts already existed in their fully developed forms.⁹ Thus, it is probable that the same *mūla* (root) Tantric text was already well known by the time of the Ajanta excavations.

The *Mahāvairocanaśūtra*, in its present recension, was translated into Chinese by the monk Yixing and the aged Indian master, Śubhākarasinha, in 725 C.E.¹⁰ The latter brought to China drawings of the mandalas of the *Sarvatathāgatataattvasaṅgraha*, the explanatory text to the *Mahāvairocanaśūtra*, which provides additional mandala cycles. Using East Asian nomenclature, the Garbhadhātu Mandala and the Vajradhātu Mandala are the primary mandalas of the two texts, respectively.¹¹ The central deity in both mandalas is Mahāvairocana, the primordial Dharmarnature, from which Śākyamuni/Vairocana emanates. As evident in Caves 6 and 7 at Aurangabad, the primary mandalas of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgatataattvasaṅgraha* were in full practice in India by the sixth century.¹²

In the *Mahāvairocanaśūtra* the central eight-petaled hall of Mahāvairocana is described as flanked by the quarters of Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi to the north and south, respectively.¹³ This same configuration, with the two attending bodhisattvas flanking Vairocana, occurs in the Ajanta and Aurangabad caves.¹⁴ Further, the central Buddhas in Caves 6 and 7 at Aurangabad display the same variant of the *Dharmacakramudrā*, with the little finger pointing to the circle of the *vitarkamndrā*-like gesture. Given

that the central image in Cave 4 at Ajanta is iconographically identical to those at Aurangabad, it is clear that the Buddha at Ajanta is specifically Vairocana of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra*.

BUDDHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE SHRINE IMAGE AT AJANTA

The caves at Ajanta serve as attested documents of the history of Indic Buddhism as well as Buddhist art. Axiomatically, the caves reflect Buddhological concerns of the time in which they were excavated. Unlike Buddhist texts that are frequently appended, “corrected,” and modified, rock-cut monuments like Ajanta are not prone to alteration. Thus, the identification of Vairocana, specifically from the *Mahāvairocanasūtra*, in these caves suggests that some form of the Tantric soteriological methodology explained in the *Mahāvairocanasūtra* was extant in the fifth century.

Moreover, as stated above, the Buddha in Cave 4 is specifically understood as Śākyamuni/Vairocana. The clue to the identification lies in the subsidiary iconographic features of the cave as well as in the fact that Śākyamuni is the *nānūsi* Buddha of the present *kalpa* (eon). If the shrine image at Ajanta were a Buddha other than Śākyamuni—for example, Kāśyapa, the Buddha preceding Śākyamuni, or Maitreya, the Buddha of the future—each would be provided with specific identifying characteristics.¹⁵ Such attributes are obviously absent in Cave 4 and other similar *vihāras* at Ajanta. Further, the shrine images in Caves 1 and 2 at Ajanta are iconographically almost identical to those in Cave 4. The renowned murals in the outer halls of these two caves are predominantly depictions of *Jātaka* tales, or the stories of the previous lives of the Buddha Śākyamuni. Thus, it is clear that Śākyamuni, as the paradigm of perfections (*pāramitās*), is the principal subject of all three caves.

As is ubiquitous in Buddhism, each monument and image can be read on several levels. Thus, the *Jātaka* stories illustrate the actions that a practitioner must undertake to become a Buddha. The Buddha, in the shrine, making the variant *Dharmacakra-mudrā* with the little finger pointing to the circle is

Śākyamuni teaching the esoteric tradition. Because he is specifically teaching esoteric methodology, and because he is attended by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi, the Buddha is clearly Vairocana of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra*. He is envisioned as presiding over Akaniṣṭa, where he resides in the “vast palace of the Dharmadhātu.”¹⁶ Thus, it is evident that the Buddha figure in Cave 4 is a dual image of Śākyamuni/Vairocana representing both his *mānuṣi* and universal aspects. □

his representatives are described. In Chinese and Japanese painting and sculpture, each rank of welcoming, and level of rebirth, into the pure land is communicated through different hand gestures.

7. For a detailed discussion of the Four Methods of Conversion and the Five Periods, see Monk Chegwan, *T'ien-T'ai Buddhism: An Outline of the Fourfold Teachings*, trans. The Buddhist Translation Seminar of Hawaii (Tokyo: Daiichi-Shobo, 1983), 55–61.

8. Chegwan, *T'ien-T'ai Buddhism*, 57.

9. See John C. Huntington, “Cave Six at Aurangabad: A Tantrayāna Monument?” in *Kalādarśana: American Studies in the Art of India*, ed. Joanna G. Williams (New Delhi, etc.: Oxford University Press, 1981), 47–55.

10. Chikyo Yamamoto, *Mahāvairocana-Sūtra* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1990), vii.

11. In the Indic region, the Vajradhātu Mandala may have been referred to as the Karmadhātu, or “Action Realm,” Mandala. This is the primary mandala of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, which appears to be the most emphasized methodology in the Indic tradition.

12. See Huntington, “Cave Six at Aurangabad,” 47–55.

13. The same configuration occurs in the mandala of the *Mañjuśrimulakalpa*, which is based on the Garbhadhātu Mandala of the *Mahāvairocanasūtra*. Yet in the former, Mañjuśrī is understood as the Buddha Vairocana in the center of the mandala. As there are no central shrine images of the deity Mañjuśrī at either Ajanta or Aurangabad, in all probability the caves are a reference to the older *Mahāvairocanasūtra*.

14. Although the quarters of the two bodhisattvas in the mandala include more than twenty-one deities and other acolytes, it is axiomatic in Buddhism to suggest the presence of an entire entourage through just the central, or presiding, deity. Therefore, though the quarter of Avalokiteśvara in the mandala includes various forms of the bodhisattva, their presence is implied through just the single image of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the caves. The same holds true for the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi.

15. Several other Buddhas occur at Ajanta and are clearly discernible by their iconographic features. For example, the Buddha in *badrāsana*, or the so-called “European pose,” on the stupa in Cave 26 is Ketumati Maitreya.

16. Yamamoto, *Mahāvairocana-Sūtra*, 1.

The Buddhist Caves at Aurangabad: The Impact of the Laity

THE PRESENT STUDY of the caves at Aurangabad owes much to the enlightening work of Professor Walter Spink, who has unfolded the history of Ajanta and related centers.¹ It is from what he calls “the period of disruption” at the Ajanta caves that I intend to begin my survey of the Buddhist complex at Aurangabad, addressing the development of this poorly understood site² in terms of patronage, audience, and function. Through an analysis of the distribution of space and imagery from the end of the fifth century onward, I hope to shed light on the site’s specific role as a sanctuary rooted in lay devotional practices rather than in the exclusive monastic tradition.

Located on a slope of the Sihyachal range between the Kaum River and the Devgiri basin, the Buddhist caves at Aurangabad are divided into two main groups (figs. 1 and 2), with a third unfinished cluster of later structures to the north.³ The oldest structure at the site, part of the western group, is the severely damaged *caitya* Cave 4, which dates to the beginning of the Common Era. Surprisingly, no early *vihāra* attached to this structure can be identified, unless it was built in perishable materials at the foot of the hill or, as seems likely, carved to the east of the *caitya* along part of the escarpment that has now collapsed. Another significant feature of the religious complex at Aurangabad is the absence of dedicatory or commemorative inscriptions, in contrast to other cave complexes in the region.⁴

After this first phase of excavation, a revival of patronage occurred in conjunction with the later Vākāṭaka’s activity at Ajanta, as Walter Spink has brilliantly shown.⁵ In fact, units 3 and 4a and the unfinished excavation 1 at Aurangabad display strong ar-

chitectural and artistic affinities with Caves 1, 2, and 26 at Ajanta.⁶ The so-called Mahāyāna phase of patronage at Aurangabad was inaugurated with the richly decorated Cave 3, which occupies the most privileged position next to the older *caitya*. This new cave is a small, perfectly designed unit (figs. 3 and 4), complete with sculpture and paintings—the latter surviving only as a few traces on the ceiling.⁷ The existence of a wealthy patron with great vision can be certainly detected behind the carefully organized space of this structure. In fact, from an accurate planimetric analysis of Cave 3 it has been possible to individuate the architectural module on which the spatial distribution of the cave was probably based—a unit equal to the radius of the columns (40 cm).⁸ The imagery and the profusion of ornamentation within Aurangabad Cave 3 seem to confirm the existence of a planned design that was fully realized thanks to the unbroken support of the sponsors. While the outer façade is ruined, the inner square area is intact, defined by twelve lavishly decorated columns and flanked on either side by two cellae and a rectangular chapel. Opposite the entrance door, on a sculpted frieze above the columns, is a depiction of the princely *Sutasoma jātaka*. A porch leads into the shrine, where a *pralambapādāsana* Buddha is flanked by two bodhisattvas in the Ajanta “style,” preceded by two unique rows of life-size sculpted kneeling devotees (figs. 5 and 6). The strong affinities in design, imagery, and sculptural details between Aurangabad Cave 3 and some of the latest caves at Ajanta (26 and 2) indicate that a few of the same hands might have worked at both sites. Nevertheless, Aurangabad Cave 3 displays a more “baroque” visual language (fig. 7), possibly a conscious manipulation of the Gupta-

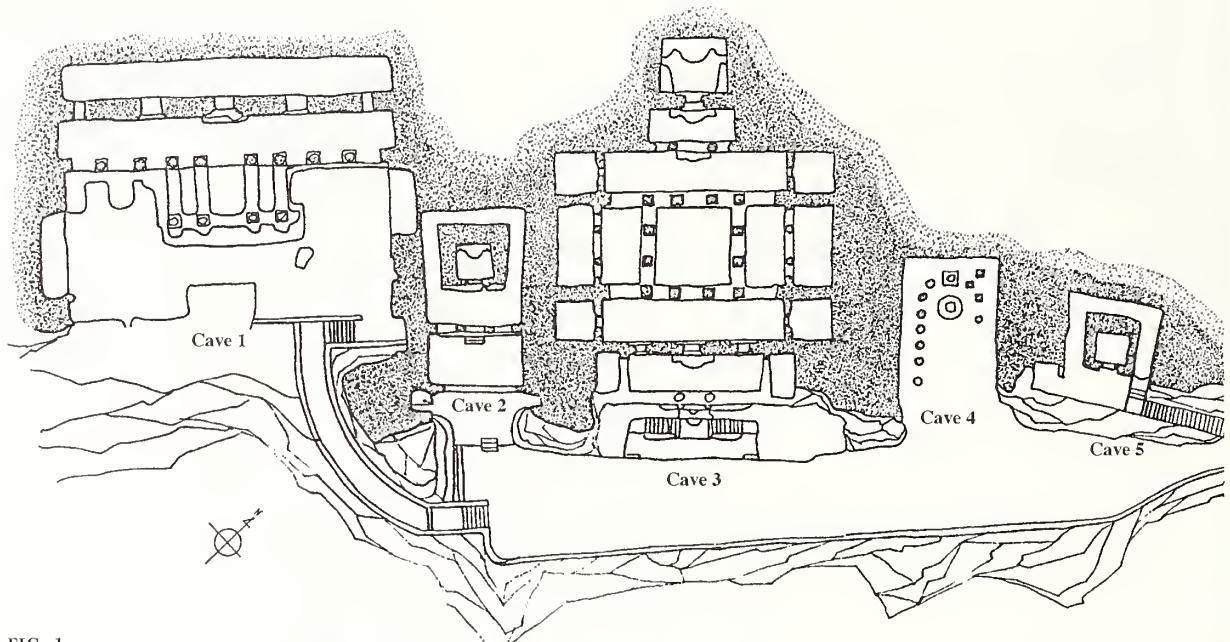


FIG. 1.
Plan of the western group of caves at Aurangabad. By Dr. Giuseppe Monzo.

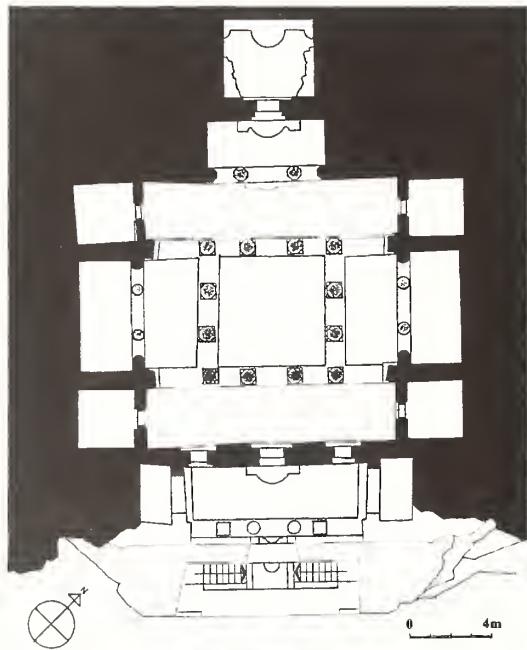


FIG. 3.
*Plan of Aurangabad Cave 3.
By Dr. Giuseppe Monzo.*

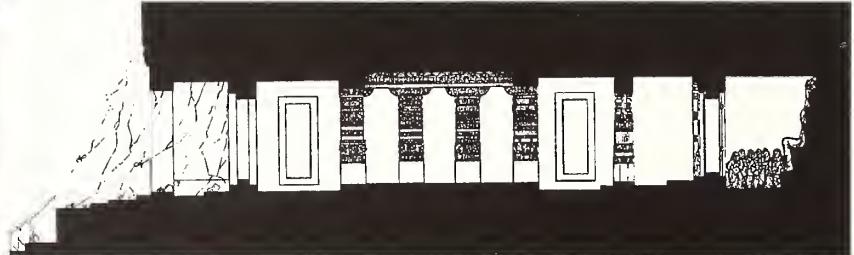


FIG. 4.
Cross section of Aurangabad Cave 3. By Dr. Giuseppe Monzo.



FIG. 5.
*Aurangabad Cave 3, shrine, devotees, eastern wall. After C. Berkson, *The Caves at Aurangabad* (New York, 1986).*

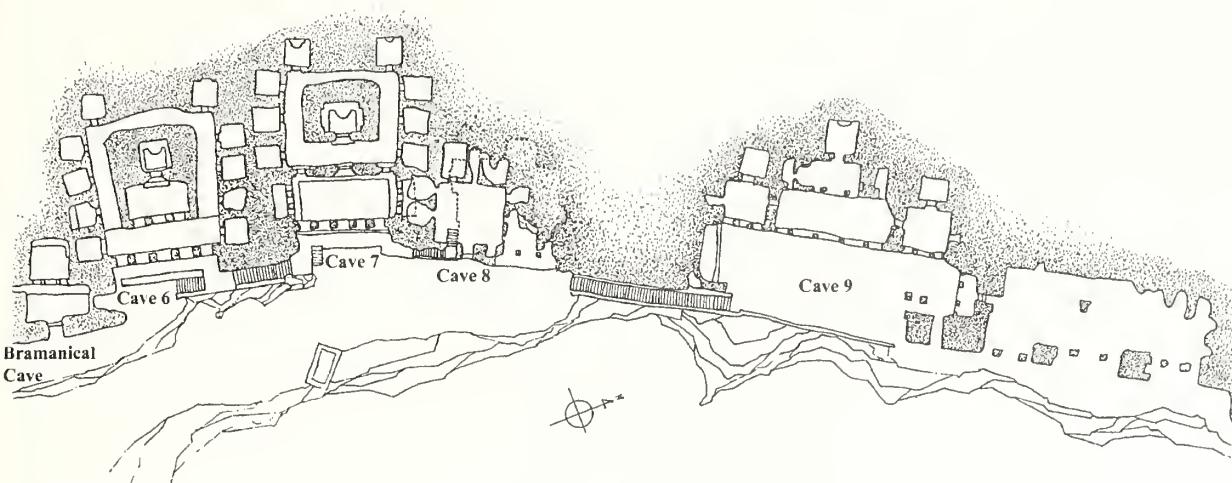


FIG. 2.

Plan of the eastern group of caves at Aurangabad. By Dr. Giuseppe Monzo.

Vākāṭaka artistic idiom, which can be interpreted as a statement of power by the new Aurangabad patrons wanting to outdo the imperial productions at Ajanta. Thus, Cave 3 at Aurangabad appears to be deeply connected with the local political landscape, perhaps sponsored by the same feudatories that took over this territory after the collapse of the Vākāṭaka empire.⁹ It seems that the new local kings excavated Aurangabad for political reasons, in order to create continuity with practices of patronage initiated by their illustrious predecessor. To do so they chose a new center with no imperial connections where they could glorify themselves and the Buddha. Aurangabad was

the most logical choice for this site—overlooking a vast plain crossed by trade routes, easily accessible, and already established in the local religious tradition with its earlier Buddhist *caitya*.



FIG. 6.

Aurangabad Cave 3, shrine, devotees, western wall.
After Berkson, Caves at Aurangabad.



FIG. 7.

Aurangabad Cave 3, interior, detail of column.
Courtesy American Institute of Indian Studies.



FIG. 8.
Aurangabad Cave 4a.
After Berkson, Caves at Aurangabad.

Unfortunately, no donative inscriptions survive from Cave 3, and one wonders whether they ever existed. In fact, the patrons of Cave 3 at Aurangabad did leave a different kind of long-lasting signature to their *dāna* (gift) in the form of the life-size kneeling devotees sculpted in the sanctum. Such unique figures, almost *a tutto tondo*, are located along the two sides of the sanctum converging toward the monumental Buddha image. They are certainly not generic devotees, since they appear to be individually characterized members of a royal group, and it seems likely that the male and female figures at the head of each row are the actual patrons of the cave.¹⁰ Their impressive and portraitlike appearance might justify the absence of inscriptions, as the princely patrons would have left behind a powerful trace of their donation in these figures eternally in devotion, as perennial receptacle of merit. In a circumstance of political instability such as the collapse of the Vākāṭaka's empire, it is conceivable that local feudatories seek-



FIG. 9.
Ajanta Cave 26, interior.
Courtesy American Institute of Indian Studies.

ing recognition would opt for such visually powerful solutions rather than poorly visible inscriptions to obtain both legitimization of their power and merit for themselves.

The fact that these individualized figures of lay devotees were represented inside the sanctum, the holiest of places, raises questions about the function of the Aurangabad caves and about the possibility of ritual access to the main image by *śrāvakas*, who were not members of the *saṅgha*.¹¹ In this case the depiction of worshippers of royal rank could also be taken as a reference to the direct connection between the spiritual *cakravartin*, the Buddha, and the temporal *cakravartin*, the king. Nevertheless, I believe that the occurrence in such a privileged position of images representing not gods or monks but lay devotees can be interpreted as an indication of the prominent secular nature of the complex at Aurangabad. In contrast to the monastic emphasis at Ajanta, Aurangabad seems to have been more open to laity, emerging as a

religious sanctuary serving primarily the nonordained members of the community.

The lack of residential structures for monks, especially in the western group of caves, confirms this hypothesis (see fig. 1). Even Cave 3, which was visually and conceptually modeled after Ajanta Cave 2, seems to have clearly abandoned the *vihāra* pattern so recurrent at the imperial Vākāṭaka complex. Only four residential-like cells showing scarce traces of use¹² were excavated along the side walls of Aurangabad Cave 3, as the planners chose to omit additional cells and to introduce two axial rectangular chapels.

Immediately to the right of the earlier *caitya* hall is an open shrine, Cave 4a—also dating to the late fifth century—that attests to the lay activity at Aurangabad because of its prominence and accessibility (fig. 8). Currently very damaged, this deep niche in the basaltic rock, once framed by four small columns, contains a majestic image of a Buddha in *dharma-cakramudrā* seated on a highly decorated throne that is flanked by two bodhisattvas. It is surprising to find such an elaborate image in an independent outdoor shrine, barely protected by a ledge of rock, as all other comparable images of this type are always carved in the most sacred cores of the caves. In fact, Cave 4a's image is very similar in style and decoration to the one carved in the body of the stupa of Ajanta Cave 26 (fig. 9) or the one in the dark sanctum of Cave 3 at Aurangabad. Here the focal iconography of the large caves crosses the threshold of the inner shrine to be easily approached and viewed in the 4a chapel at the entrance of the complex. This small and independent structure containing only a main image is an unprecedented architectural solution¹³ that illustrates the innovative spirit of lay patronage and audience at Aurangabad. It is possible that a wealthy individual sponsored this public unit in conjunction with the princely patronage of Caves 1 and 3.

The secular organization of the Buddhist cave complex at Aurangabad, which was intimately connected with lay patronage and devotion, continued beyond the end of the fifth century. The next phase of excavation at the site is characterized by the diffusion of new cave plans focusing on an increased use of public space. The innovative designs appear to reflect the ritual needs of the lay community and indicate a differently mediated approach to the deity.

Cave 2¹⁴ (see fig. 1) shows a distinctive plan consisting of a simple shrine chamber enclosed within a corridor for circumambulation, which in turn was approached through a small, now collapsed, *maṇḍapa*. This structure, squeezed into the last available rock within the western group of caves, has a central sanctum containing the usual seated Buddha in *dharma-cakramudrā* flanked by two bodhisattvas. The entrance to the cella is guarded by Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara, both attended by *nāgarājas*. The stylistic idiom of these figures is far from the late Vākāṭaka one at Ajanta or Aurangabad and seems to be in line with the sixth- and seventh-century Kalacuri Brahmanical cave sculpture found at sites such as Elephanta, Jogesvari, Mandapesvar, Mahur, and Ellora.

What is particularly interesting in Cave 2 at Aurangabad is that the corridor surrounding the shrine is literally filled with a multitude of heterogeneous panels sculpted on the walls (fig. 10). Most of them display an established iconographic format, with the Buddha seated on a lotus throne and flanked by two bodhisattvas. In many of these images, the “triad” pattern intersects with the so-called depictions of the Miracle of Śrāvasti, when the Tathāgata multiplies himself on lotus flowers. To explore the source of this imagery is beyond the scope of the present article, but it is sufficient to point out that such an iconographic pattern occurs invariably in votive panels donated by individuals in the Buddhist caves of the Deccan during the so-called Mahāyāna phase. At Ajanta, Walter Spink has suggested that these “intrusive” panels were added during the disruption of the site, when the Vākāṭkas lost control over the caves and patronage suddenly collapsed prior to the abandonment of the complex.¹⁵

Conversely, at Aurangabad Cave 2 the design of the cave seems to have been conceived in order to accommodate these attestations of individual devotion, as the *pradakṣīṇapatha* was left undecorated to make space for such imagery.¹⁶ A singular feature that betrays the popular votive origin of this body of imagery is the frequent depiction of worshippers at the bottom register of these panels: they are mostly lay people, often women, and rarely members of the *samgha*. Further, in Cave 2, images of a squatting female, commonly identified as Lajjā Gaurī holding



FIG. 10.
Aurangabad Cave 2, interior, detail of the western pradakṣinapatha wall.
Courtesy American Institute of Indian Studies.

a lotus,¹⁷ occur in four instances in association with representations of the Tathāgata's epiphany (fig. 11). The emergence into the Buddhist imagery of such a figure tied to the world of local and ancestral beliefs seems to confirm the lay devotional matrix of this unit and its sculpted panels.

The whole conception of Cave 2 at Aurangabad seems to respond to the devotional necessities of the śrāvakas, which is not surprising at a site that showed a strong lay orientation since the inception of the so-called Mahāyāna phase of patronage. The plan with a central sanctum certainly allowed for easier access to the deity and the performance of devotional practices. Of particular significance is the fact that the core of the shrine is projected forward to meet the needs of a larger community. This architectural format appears sporadically in many parts of the Buddhist world in conjunction with structures located outside the exclusive monastic areas and generally associated with lay devotional practices. Besides Central Asia,¹⁸ relevant examples of such shrines can be found in Sri Lanka in association with the *patimaghara*, or "shrine receptacle of the image of the Buddha."¹⁹ It is interesting to observe that such a structure, identified in Pali also as *pāsāda* or palace, the residence of



FIG. 11.
Aurangabad Cave 2, interior, detail of a votive panel.
After Berkson, Caves at Aurangabad.

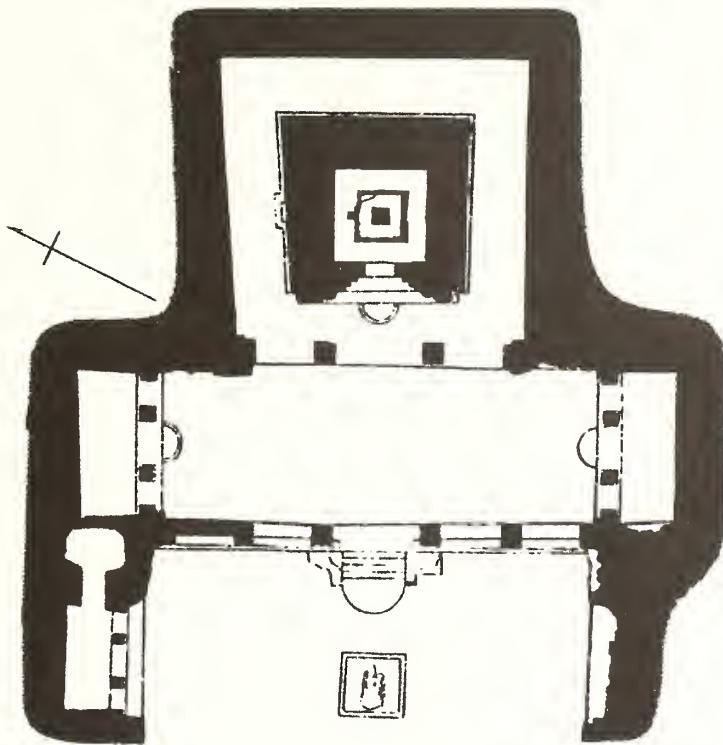


FIG. 12.
Plan of Ellora Cave 21.

the Buddha, was central only to the suburban *pabbata vihāras*—religious complexes with a more distinct devotional purpose.

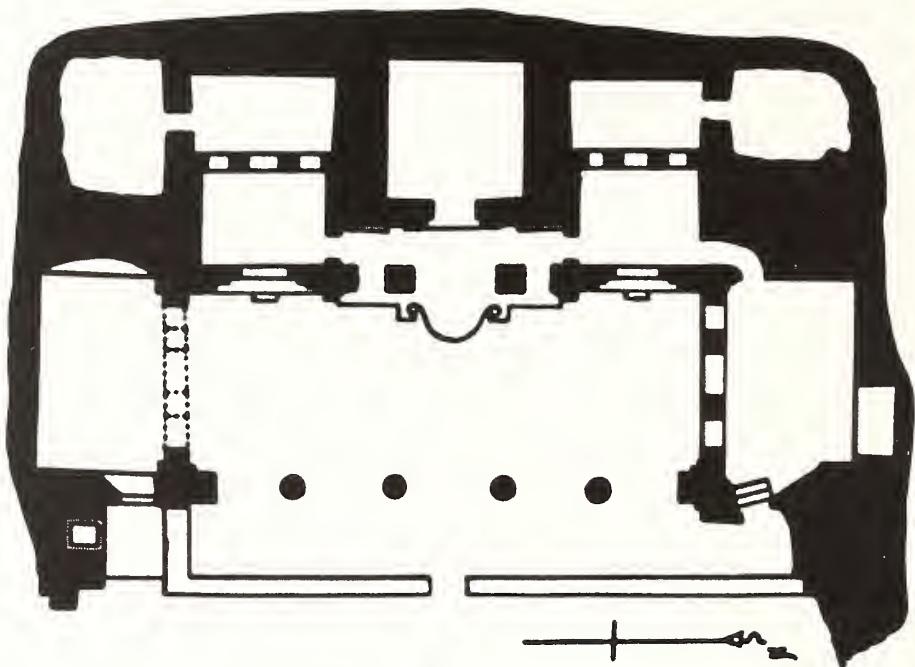
At Aurangabad, the plan with a central sanctum and *pradakṣinapatha* is also found in Cave 5. Further, it occurs with some additions in Caves 6 and 7 of the eastern group,²⁰ providing us with a useful parameter in support of a chronological framework for the second phase of activity at the site. A comparable layout appears in a Brahmanical context at Ellora Caves 14, 20, and in particular Cave 21, the so-called Rameśvara cave (fig. 12). The architecture and sculptural evidence seems to indicate that Caves 2, 5, and the entire eastern complex at Aurangabad belong to the same phase of patronage as the above-mentioned excavations at Ellora,²¹ which Walter Spink has attributed to the Kalacuri kings,²² who probably controlled these parts of Maharashtra.²³

With the excavation of Caves 2 and 5, all the rock available around the Hinayāna *caitya* at Aurangabad was exhausted. Thus, a new cluster of units was initiated to the east with Caves 6 and 7 (see fig. 2), still in keeping with the devotional orientation of the site. During the last phase of activity at Aurangabad the space accessible to public devotion was maximized,

and new ways of approaching the deity appear to have been in practice.

The unfinished Cave 9 represents the next and final stage at Aurangabad—in which the expansion of the public space makes the structure even more physically and emotionally accessible to devotion. The unusual plan of this cave (see fig. 2), with three sancta opening onto a large, rectangular porch, has been generally attributed to its hasty completion, as patrons tend to finish the main Buddha images to gain merit before abandoning a site. Contrary to what we would expect in a similar rushed situation, the Buddha in the central shrine, likely the focal icon on which the most effort would converge, was only roughed out, while the main images in the two side sancta were fully carved. It seems possible that the various shrines had different patrons, who interrupted their work in the cave at different times. Nevertheless, I believe that the uncommon layout was part of the original plan, and the abrupt interruption of work at the site did not change the basic organization of space. The large rectangular *māṇḍapa* was probably part of the original design, as it functioned to unify and allow more direct access to the images in the sancta. In Caves 5 and 6 at Aurangabad we

FIG. 13.
Plan of
Mandapesvar
Cave.



already notice an increasing emphasis on the *maṇḍapa* as a bridge between the outer world and the inner sacred space of the cave. Cave 9 represents the ultimate development of this concept, in which the barriers between the two spheres are almost removed and the *maṇḍapa* becomes the cave. It marks the climax of the prominent lay orientation of the site that grows in keeping with the devotional needs of the śrāvakas. The presence of a large *parinirvāṇa* scene carved on the western wall of Cave 9, usually a popular devotional icon, supports the hypothesis that the structure was conceived as a place for collective worship. In fact, such images are generally located in more accessible shrines like the *caitya* Cave 26 at Ajanta.

The cave layout, with three shrines opening on a *maṇḍapa*, is a pattern that occurs elsewhere in Kalacuri architecture. The Śaiva temple at Mandapesvar in Konkan (fig. 13), attributed to Kalacuri patronage and also thought to be the result of a hasty excavation as it was never completed,²⁴ is surprisingly similar to Cave 9. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that Mandapesvar might have had some impact on the planning of Cave 9 at Aurangabad.²⁵

While innovative in format, with its ample *maṇḍapa* leading directly into the most sacred units of the structure, the basic three-sacra type adopted

at Aurangabad 9 had already emerged in the Buddhist world. Within the same region it occurs in the fifth-century cave of Ghatotkacha²⁶ and in the unfinished Cave 21 at Ajanta.

In conclusion, I hope that this brief survey of the development of cave planning at Aurangabad has shed light on the function of this complex as a center oriented toward popular devotion and secular patronage. Its so-called Mahāyāna phase appears to have been intrinsically connected with the collapse of imperial Vākāṭaka and their patronage at Ajanta. Aurangabad rises in response to this exclusive monastic center, controlled by imperial patrons, to testify to the triumph of the regional powers and local popular Buddhist forces at the end of the fifth century. The accessibility of the site, the small number of cells for the *saṅgha*, and the presence of life-size depictions of lay devotees, probably noble donors, in the sanctum of Cave 3 certainly indicate the growing importance of the “secular” at Aurangabad.

Its life and prosperity continued to be strongly rooted in the world of lay devotion and patronage through time, as illustrated by Cave 2 and related structures datable to the Kalacuri period. The strong linkage of the site with popular religiosity is particularly evident in Cave 2, with its central sanctum and *pradakṣiṇapatha* for circumambulation left

undecorated to display a number of individually commissioned votive panels. Finally, in the eastern group of caves, the unusual and unfinished structure 9, with three shrines on a wide *maṇḍapa* and the *parinirvāṇa*, seems to mark the culmination of the popular tendency at the site, reducing even further the distance between the common devotees and the holiest of images. □

Notes

1. It would be impossible to cite here all the significant contributions by Walterjī to the understanding of Ajanta and other rock-hewn religious centers in the western Deccan. I would like to remember his *Ajanta to Ellora*, which appeared as a special issue of *Marg* in 1967, and some of his most recent articles: "The Great Cave at Elephanta: A Study of Sources," in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. B. Smith and E. Zelliot (Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1983), 235–82; "The Archaeology of Ajanta," *Ars Orientalis* 21 (1991): 67–94; "Before the Fall: Pride and Piety at Ajanta," in *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. B. Stoler Miller (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 65–77; finally his booklet *Ajanta, A Brief History and Guide* (Ann Arbor: Asian Art Archives, University of Michigan, 1994).

2. Surprisingly the caves at Aurangabad have scarcely been investigated by scholars. A first description of the complex appeared in 1858, in Dr. Bradley's *Account of Statistics of the Sarkar of Paithan*, done on behalf of the Nizam's government. More scientific was the approach of James Burgess in his *Report of the Antiquities in the Bidar and Aurangabad Districts, 1875–76* (London: W. H. Allen, 1878). The more recent and scarce bibliography on Aurangabad, besides guidebooks, includes: G. Yazdani, "The Rock-Hewn Temples of Aurangabad: Their Sculpture and Architecture," *Indian Art and Letters* 1 (1936–37): 1–9; R. S. Gupte, "An Interesting Panel from the Aurangabad Caves," *Marathwada University Journal* 3.2 (1963): 59–63; D. Brown-Levine, "Aurangabad: A Stylistic Analysis," *Artibus Asiae* 38 (1966): 175–88; A. Ray, *Aurangabad Sculptures* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1996); K. N. Dikshit, "A Newly Discovered Buddha Image from Aurangabad Caves," in *Madhu: Recent Researches in Indian Archaeology and Art History*, ed. Nagaraja Rao (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1981), 235–36; J. Huntington, "Cave Six at Aurangabad: A Tantrāyana Monument," in *Kalādarśana: American Studies in the Art of India*, ed. J. Williams (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 47–55; C. Berkson, *The Caves at Aurangabad* (New York: Mapin, 1986); R. Brown, "A Lajjā Gaurī in a Buddhist Context at Aurangabad," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 13.2 (1990): 1–16; D.

Qureshi, *Art and Vision of Aurangabad Caves* (Delhi: Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, 1998).

3. We do not know the ancient name of the complex, though it has been suggested that the site was known as Rajatalaka based on an early inscription found at Kanheri. S. Gokhale, "Ajanta: The Center of Monastic Education," in *The Art of Ajanta, New Perspectives*, ed. R. Parimoo (New Delhi: Books & Books, 1991), 52.

4. Donative epigraphic records appear at most of the Buddhist cave sites of the Deccan, such as Bhaja, Karli, Pitalkhora, and Ajanta. See J. Burgess and I. Bhagwanlal, *Inscriptions from the Cave Temples of Western India* (Delhi, 1880) or V.V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Vakatakas*, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum 5 (Ootacamund: Government Epigraphist for India, 1963).

5. Walter Spink has traced the connections between Aurangabad and Ajanta since his 1967 study *Ajanta to Ellora*.

6. The later *caitya* Cave 26 at Ajanta shows columns and decorative elements comparable to the ones occurring in Aurangabad
3. The *vihāras* 1 and 2 at Ajanta also share a similar spatial organization with unit 3 at Aurangabad.

7. Remnants of painted medallions that survive in the antechamber to the sanctum are almost identical to the one found at Ajanta Cave 17.

8. This study has been conducted in collaboration with the architect Dr. Giuseppe Monzo. See P. Brancaccio, "Il Complesso Rupestre di Aurangabad" (Ph.D. dissertation, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples, 1994), appendix 1.

9. According to Walter Spink, the local kings, the Aśmakas, controlled the region after the fall of the Vākāṭakas. See W. Spink, "The Vākāṭaka's Flowering and Fall," in *Art of Ajanta*, 71–99.

10. On portraits in ancient India, see V. Dehejia, "The Very Idea of a Portrait," *Ars Orientalis* 28 (1998): 41–47. For the visual idioms and meanings behind patron's portraits, see P. Kaimal, "Passionate Bodies: Constructions of the Self in South Indian Portraits," *Archives of Asian Art* 48 (1995): 6–16.

11. Figures in devotional attitude already appear at Ajanta, sculpted on the bases of the main Buddhas' thrones. They are small, never acquire a prominent position in the sancta, and often seem to make reference to the audience witnessing the First Sermon at Sarnath. The presence of devotees by the feet of the Buddha in the shrine seems to become more established during what Spink recognizes as the later excavation phase at the site (A.D. 475 onward), culminating with nine small figures carved on the pedestal of the Buddha's throne in Cave 1 sanctum. In this light the impressive life-size lay devotees at Aurangabad represent the culmination of a tendency that had already emerged in nūce at Ajanta.

12. Only two inner cells show, in the upper part of the door frames, traces of a door hinge, usually taken as indicating use of the chambers.

13. We do not come across comparable isolated chapels at Ajanta with such elaborate shrine-type icons. They are always attached to larger caves, such as the side wings of Cave 26.

14. Cave 2 is located between the earlier units 1 and 3, at the same level as Cave 3.

15. See Spink, "Checklist of Sculptured Intrusions at Ajanta," in *Ajanta, A Brief History and Guide*, 36–37.

16. Donative panels were primarily located in visible areas of the structure. It seems likely that some of them might have also been painted, as at Ajanta, and simply have not survived at Aurangabad.

17. Robert Brown, "A Lajjā Gaurī," identifies this image as related to the Buddhist goddess Vasudharā.

18. A survey of the square type of plan appears in H. G. Franz, "Ambulatory Temples in Buddhism and Hinduism," *South Asian Archaeology 1979*, ed. H. Härtel (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1981), 449–58. The layout with a central cella that could be circumambulated became very popular at the cave temples of Kyzil, Kumtura, Bazaklik, and Qutcha. A. Grünwedel, *Allbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch Turkestan* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1912); A. von Le Coq, *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan. An Account of the Activities and Adventures of the Second and Third German Turfan Expeditions* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1928).

19. R. Prematilleke and R. Silva, "A Buddhist Monastery Type of Ancient Ceylon Showing Mahayanist Influence," *Artibus Asiae* 30.1 (1968): 61–84; S. Bandaranayake, *Sinhalese Monastic Architecture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974).

20. In these caves there are, in addition to the central shrine and *pradakṣinapatha*, small cells lining the side walls.

21. The chronological issues related to the later phase of patronage at Aurangabad are too complex to be included in the present paper. It is probably enough to remember that the affinities between the Kalacuri caves at Ellora and the later units at Aurangabad, in particular Cave 7, were already put forward by W. Spink, "Ellora's Earliest Phase," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Benares* 1 (1967): 10.

The Brahmanical rock-cut caves at Mahur and Dhoke, with a central shrine, also represent interesting comparisons for the units excavated in the later phase of activity at Aurangabad. For Mahur see Soundara Rajan, *Cave Temples of the Deccan* (New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1981), 164–67; for the cave at Dhoke see G. Tarr, "The Siva Cave Temples at Dhokesvara," *Oriental Art* 15.4 (1969): 260–80. I do not entirely agree, however, with the author's interpretation of the Kalacuri structure at Dhoke.

22. For the chronology of these caves at Ellora, see Spink, *Ajanta to Ellora*.

23. Unfortunately, we do not have a clear picture of the historical developments in the region after the collapse of the Vākāṭakas. It seems reasonable to suggest that after a conflict between the Traikuṭakas and the Viṣṇukuṇḍins, the Traikuṭakas briefly controlled the area. Finally at the end of the sixth century the Kalacuri seem to have established their supremacy. For a review of the various historical issues, see Brancaccio, "Il Complesso Rupestre di Aurangabad," 21–29.

24. Spink, "The Great Cave at Elephanta," 243.

25. Although it is hard to establish secure chronological sequences with regard to the structures in consideration, it seems reasonable to suggest that the caves in Konkan represent the first stage of Kalacuri patronage in Maharashtra.

26. With three shrines on the back wall, the central one with the main Buddha icon and the side ones probably subsidiary chapels with painted images. See W. Spink, "Ajanta and Ghatotkacha: A Preliminary Analysis," *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1966): 135–56.

The Eponymous Elephant of Elephanta

ELPHANTA MAY NOT SEEM in need of attention as much as other parts of South Asian art at the moment. This is precisely why the topic constitutes an appropriate tribute to Walter Spink, who is responsible for this happy situation. When I entered the field, the exact date of the great Śiva cave at Elephanta was an unsettled question, but it was thought to be "somewhat late," following comparable caves at Ellora, and "not exceptional architecturally."¹ Beginning in 1967, Professor Spink hewed away at the received ideas, arguing that the Elephanta grew directly out of earlier excavations at Ajanta and Jorgesvari, constituted a precedent for the Dhumar Lena at Ellora, and could reasonably be placed in the mid-sixth century under Kalacuri rule.² Meeting strong resistance from elders in the field, Spink gradually convinced many scholars. More significant even than the correctness of his dating or its acceptance is the fact that it has opened the way to wider approaches to an important monument. The cave's plan can now be seen as complex rather than confused; its iconography can be seen as orchestrated; and planners and carvers can be seen as working in concert. Chronology matters in enabling us to see the significance of the great cave in relation to its actual precedents and not dwarfed by the considerably later and different Kailāsanātha at Ellora.

The present essay claims no such lofty contribution. It represents a footnote to the work of Walter Spink and his successors. A life-size image of an elephant once stood on the docks of the island in the Bombay harbor, leading to the Portuguese name for the island.³ In 1814 its front portion broke off, and in 1912 it was reassembled in the Victoria Zoological

cal Gardens on the mainland. There the story is usually left, a curiosity that originally stood half a mile from the cave, capturing the attention of early visitors and inviting an orientalizing gaze as if it really belonged in a zoo. Questions remain. Did it have any relationship to the cave? What was the original intent in carving it? In fact, these queries may be extended to other monolithic images of elephants.

If we turn from a front view of our image (fig. 1) to the Ardhanārīśvara panel of the great cave (fig. 4), where Indra hovers on his elephant, it may seem unlikely that they were carved at the same time. Indra's vehicle charges majestically with delicate articulation of its lower leg, its ear and trunk bend gracefully, and the musculature of the head is shown with sensitivity, including an almost anthropomorphic eyebrow ridge.⁴ Perhaps the head of the freestanding image is too damaged for facial comparison. The legs are clearly posts. The sole indication of fleshy mass is a schematic ridge behind the front legs (figs. 2 and 3). The body is tubular and elongated. Could this have been the work of the same carvers who gave us the subtle forms of the great cave?

I SHALL GO ON to argue that in other unrelated sites the same differences can be found between a freestanding pachyderm and arguably contemporary reliefs that depict with loving detail the animal as it moves naturally. For example, in Orissa the animal that emerges from a matrix of rock at Dhauli shows a selective sense of observation (fig. 5). While the skull and ears quiver with life, legs and trunk are unnaturally stumpy. There is more inconsistency here than in the smaller images on Aśokan capitals.⁵



FIG. 1



FIG. 2

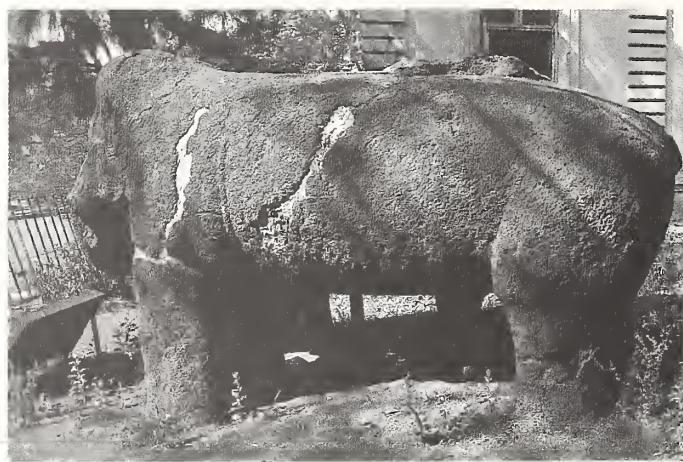


FIG. 3

FIGS. 1–3.
*Elephant from
Elephanta,
now in Mumbai.*

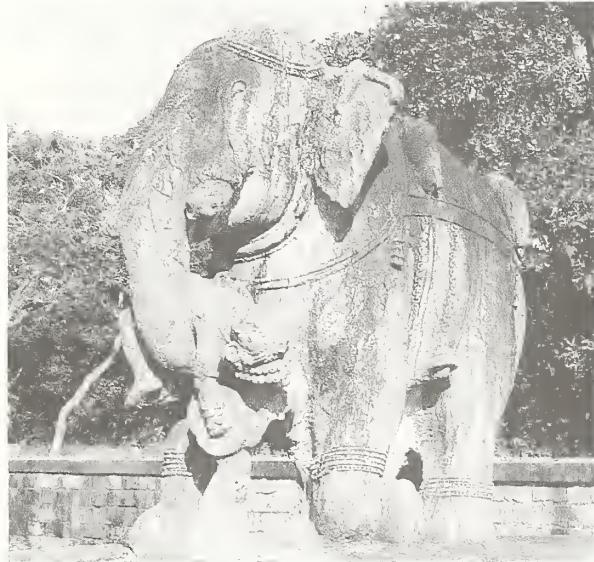


FIG. 4 (LEFT).
Elephanta, Ardhanarīśvara, detail of Indra's elephant.

FIG. 5 (ABOVE).
Dhauli, Aśokan elephant.

FIG. 6 (BELOW LEFT).
Udayagiri (Orissa), elephant in front of Gaṇeśa Gumphā.

FIG. 7 (BELOW).
Konarak, war elephant.



Here the explanation that the local Dhauli sculptor was working in stone for the first time is tempting. At nearby Udayagiri, two elephants in the round yet equally stiff in their body guard the entrance of Cave 10, the Gaṇeśa Gumphā (fig. 6). Despite some de-

tails in the ears, these show none of the vitality of the animals in possibly earlier reliefs at these same caves.⁶ By the thirteenth-century royal enterprise of Konarak, movement, flying ears, and abundant detail are possible in freestanding animals (fig. 7).



FIG. 8.
Mamallapuram, Great Relief, detail.



FIG. 9.
Mamallapuram, freestanding elephant beside Nakula-Sahadeva ratha.



I shall argue that this is less a matter of technical advance or increase in representational skill than of altered meaning.

At Mamallapuram in the seventh century, elephants are a prominent subject, both freestanding and in relief (figs. 8, 9). As at Elephanta, they share subtle cranial modeling but differ in the treatment of the legs. The precise way in which the top outer corner of the ear folds over might suggest that they are the product of a single workshop of carvers; yet the ears in relief hug the body, while those of the image in the round flare out at right angles, made possible by the sturdiness of granite and increasing the awesome impact of the animal. In the latter alone, the feet are schematic and the legs tubular, with three perfunctory semicircles indicating wrinkled skin. Chisel marks remain on the feet as on the matrix of stone, betokening incompletion.

And in the mid-eighth century at Rāṣṭrakūṭa Ellora a similar distinction is visible. The freestanding elephants that flank the Kailāsanātha stand more stiffly than those lined up beneath the great temple.

FIG. 10.
Kailāsanātha, Ellora, view from northwest.



FIG. 11.
Kailāsanātha, Ellora,
detail of base.



FIG. 12.
Phasula (Ganjam dist., Orissa),
Upendra Bhanja Maharana
and assistants at work.

The difference is accentuated by the loss of the ears, which appear in figure 10 to have been fitted into sockets as separate pieces of stone, presumably flaring to the side energetically. Yet from no side does this animal in the round show the undulating curves and varied detail visible even in the stable supporting row shown in figure 11 (or in the flanks of those who turn to fight lions that adjoin the key relief of Rāvaṇa Shaking Mt. Kailāsa).

One major factor in all these images is surely the working methods of the sculptors. Rock-cut forms

must perforce be cut from the periphery inward; simple inertia would explain the fact that the matrix between the legs is attended to last. As Walter Spink has noted, in caves work from the top down is normal. Surely the characteristic head of the elephant would be undertaken early on by the master carver. The fact that this was removed at Elephanta (and Udayagiri and Ellora) is a sign of the resources devoted to the project of carving and of the assurance of the sculptors. Apprentices might work on the lower elements, as directed by the master (fig. 12). In huge

images, the number of carvers is surely multiplied, and the master may have devoted himself to the head, now damaged in the case of Elephanta. If the original mass was a living boulder, a mistake might understandably occur in the length of the body of the animal being created by several artisans working simultaneously. Breakage of ears, trunk, or the entire head in the case of Elephanta, indicates the unfamiliarity of many of these undertakings, in which the designer was taking unusual risks.

At the same time, these various examples obviously have diverse roles and meanings related to their visual presence. At Ellora, the two positions lend themselves to different interpretations. The row visible in figure 11 constitutes a particularly vivid case of the supportive role of elephants and other animals, holding up the mountainlike temple just as they support the universe. Hence the unsettling nature of the portion where they charge against lions, threatening the stability of world order, as does Rāvaṇa in the adjoining image. The symmetrical, larger freestanding pair would seem to guard the temple (fig. 10). They also evoke the living elephants that still inhabit the *choultries* of south Indian temples, used in processions when the *utsava mūrtis* travel outside. Thus the perfunctory form of the freestanding animals is appropriate to their formulaic function, whereas what one might expect to be a formula of support is vividly rendered as part of the dramatic conceit of this unique shrine.

At Mamallapuram, the Great Relief has inspired a rich welter of narrative interpretations in which the elephants participate.⁷ The three-dimensional animal in figure 9 is single and not one of a pair of guardians. Its meaning has entered into discussions of the iconography of the nearby Arjuna *ratha*, be that a shrine to Indra, Murugan, or Aiyanār-Śāstā, as Susan Huntington convincingly argues.⁸ Its meaning was surely enriched by a characteristic Pallava visual pun on the elephant-back (*gaja-prsthā*) form of the Nakula-Sahadeva *ratha* immediately to the west.

At Udayagiri, the contrast between the implications of guardians (fig. 5) and lively animals in narrative reliefs is straightforward. Possibly the war elephants of Konarak confound these categories. They

guard massively, as do horses and lions. Yet the elephants and horses are in greater movement than the heraldic, schematic lions. Each animal has its representational character, in part a function of familiarity and traditions of carving, but contributing to a different impact and meaning.

The significance of the Dhauli Elephant has never been explained to my satisfaction. The word *seto* (=śveto), or “the white one,” occurs at the end of the Sixth Rock Edict inscribed on the scarp below the image, and this has been interpreted as referring to Māyā’s dream of a white elephant and hence to the Buddha.⁹ A combination of political and religious meaning is also plausible in the Maurya context. But why the very deliberate engagement of the animal in a cloud of uncarved rock of the hill? I once put this question to sculptors in a village in southern Orissa, and one old man with twinkling eyes said to me, “Well, elephants and hills are alike: they both had wings that were cut off, so they fell to earth.”

The great elephantological text springs to mind, the *Mātaṅgalilā* by Nilakantha. This describes the event:

Formerly elephants could go anywhere they pleased, and assume any shape; they roamed as they liked in the sky and on the earth. In the northern quarter of the Himalaya Mountain there is a banyan tree which has a length and breadth of two hundred leagues. On it the excellent elephants alighted (after flying through the air).

They broke off a branch (which fell) upon a hermitage place, where dwelt a hermit named Dirghatapas. He was angered by this and straightway cursed the elephants. Hence, you see, the elephants were deprived of the power of moving at will, and came to be vehicles for even mortal men. The elephants of the quarters, however, were not cursed.¹⁰

Heinrich Zimmer, who had translated this text into German two years before the version of Franklin Edgerton quoted here, saw a connection with the myth that mountains once flew.¹¹ Thus in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Mainaka tells Hanumān,

Long ago, my son, when the great mountains had wings, they ranged at will over the earth, causing obstruction everywhere.

When the great god Indra, chastiser of Pāka, heard about the mountains' behaviour, he cut off their wings by the thousand with his thunderbolt.¹²

Such free association of ideas characterized Zimmer's *Geistgeschichte* and struck the more positivist Edgerton as fanciful.¹³ The rural Orissan sculptor apparently took this same flight of fancy. I am led to wonder whether the comparison may not, along with simple visual resemblance, have encouraged many a carver, particularly those who began with rounded natural rocks, to envision elephants. I am not suggesting that they had read the seemingly obscure *Mātaṅgalilā* but that it, like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, preserved lore of broad folkloric currency.

Returning to Elephanta, are we to imagine this rationale for the elephant by the docks? If that were one of a symmetrical pair, its primary function would seem to be a guardian, as at the Kailāsanātha, Konarak, and Udayagiri. If alone like the monolith at Mamallapuram, identification with Śāstā, Murugan, or Indra is less likely here. In either case, for the designers of the majestic cave, an added visual play upon the resemblance between rock and elephant rooted in the ground would enrich the meaning in a way that complements the great images there. Obviously this common winged origin did not lead to the carving of elephants alone, as opposed to lions, horses, boars, or serpents out of boulders. Each of these had its religious role, as did the elephant generally. But the commonality of elephant and mountain deprived of wings might well have enriched other interpretations, particularly for the carver whose occupation encouraged a respect for boulders. As Walter Spink's work on Ajanta has often made clear, the ingenuity and intellect of the artisan deserve credit. □

Notes

1. Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 200, suggesting an eighth-century date. The fourth edition of this work revised the date to the seventh century (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1982), 196. The fifth edition states, "Current opinion favors a date as early as the second half of the sixth century" (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1994), 235.

2. Walter M. Spink, *Ajanta to Ellora* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1967). Also "The Great Cave at Elephanta: A Study of Sources," in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Delhi : Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1983). There is no need to detail the refinements of Spink's ideas and their acceptance by others.

3. William Daniell's engraving from his visit of 1794 showing the elephant as it stood appears as the frontispiece of Wendy Donniger O'Flaherty et al., *Elephanta: The Cave of Siva* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

4. Some features are visible more clearly in Carmel Berkson's angled photo, pl. 33, of O'Flaherty et al., *Elephanta*.

5. On the Sankisa elephant, details such as wrinkles on ankles and under the neck are schematic, yet the contours of the body curve with vitality. Cf. J. Irwin, "The True Chronology of Aśokan Pilars," *Artibus Asiae* 44.4 (1983): fig. 2. On the abacus of the Sarnath lion capital, the elephant lumbers in movement, the slender trunk twisting to reveal creased skin on its inner side.

6. Debala Mitra notes that the detached elephants were probably added when the interior of the first-century C.E. cave was altered, and she cites an eighth- or ninth-century inscription near the added interior Ganeśa (*Udayagiri and Khandagiri* [New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1975], 39–43). Her plates give a good sense of the vividly cavorting elephants in the early reliefs.

7. For a recent account, see Padma Kaimal, "Playful Ambiguity and Political Authority in the Large Relief at Mamallapuram," *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1994): 1–27.

8. Susan L. Huntington, "Iconographic Reflection on the Arjuna Ratha," in *Kalādarśana*, ed. J. G. Williams (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH in collaboration with American Institute of Indian Studies, 1981), 57–67.

9. E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 94–95. Other related Aśokan allusions include the inscription at Girnar *sa/rva-sveto hasti sarvalokahāro nāmo* ("hail to the entirely white elephant bringing happiness to the whole world," *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 26–27) and a line drawing of an elephant with the label *gajatame* at Kalsi (*Inscriptions of Aśoka*, 50).

10. Franklin Edgerton, *The Elephant-lore of the Hindus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 44.
11. Heinrich Zimmer, *Spiel um den Elefanten* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1929), 18.
12. *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki*, vol. 5, trans. Robert P. Goldman and Sally J. Sutherland Goldman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 266.
13. Edgerton, *Elephant-lore of the Hindus*, xiv. Cf. Gerald Chapple, “Heinrich and Henry R. Zimmer, The Translator Translated,” in Heinrich Zimmer, *Coming into His Own*, ed. M. H. Case (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 61–85. A connection between winged elephants and a flying Mt. Kailasa is suggested by a nineteenth-century south Indian image illustrated in Henry Ginsburg, *Thai Manuscript Painting* (London: British Library, 1989), fig. 13.

The Rāmāyaṇa Cycle on the Kailāsanātha Temple at Ellora

THE KAILĀSANĀTHA TEMPLE at Ellora, dating mainly from the third quarter of the eighth century, is justly famous for its architectural majesty and iconographic richness (fig. 1). In addition to these renowned features, the temple is also exceptional for its extensive narrative cycles from the *Rāmāyaṇa* (fig. 2) and *Mahābhārata*, which are featured in parallel friezes on the lower exterior walls of the front porch (*sabhā-maṇḍapa*). While these narrative registers have long been recognized in general as representing episodes from the two epics,¹ perhaps less familiar are the full identifications of the individual episodes depicted and their relationship to the literary traditions of southern India. As the religion scholar John Stratton Hawley has already admirably explicated the *Mahābhārata* and *Kṛṣṇacarita* reliefs on the northern porch wall,² this essay is confined to the *Rāmāyaṇa* cycle.

Rāmāyaṇa narrative reliefs were a particularly favored subject with which to adorn the bases or plinths of temples, especially in southern India.³ The *Rāmāyaṇa* cycle at Ellora is depicted in eight registers of continuous narration that, except for the first and third ones, read from the viewer's left to right.⁴ Generally, two registers are used to illustrate one book (*kāṇḍa*) of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The story is visually represented in continuous narrative by various figures engaged in key, dramatic actions. A minimum of buildings and landscape elements are used to set the stage and clarify the narrative.

The epic cycles on the Kailāsanātha temple provide a coherent and symmetrical decorative

program for the lower exterior walls of the *sabhā-maṇḍapa* and entrance to the temple. A substantial portion of each of the two monumental masterpieces of Indian literature is presented on what is arguably the most awe-inspiring Hindu monument of India. The *Rāmāyaṇa* cycle is more detailed and longer than the *Mahābhārata* frieze, but the addition of the *Kṛṣṇacarita* registers equalizes the overall length of the two relief panels and establishes a visual and iconographical balance. A precedent for juxtaposing the story of Kṛṣṇa with the *Mahābhārata* is, of course, the *Harivamśa*, a second-century appendix to the *Mahābhārata* dealing exclusively with the life of Kṛṣṇa.⁵ As Hawley has pointed out,⁶ the selection of the *Mahābhārata* episodes and the Kṛṣṇa life scenes emphasizes the heroic role of Kṛṣṇa, just as the *Rāmāyaṇa* events proclaim Rāma's valor.

THE RĀMĀYAṆA STORY

The *Rāmāyaṇa* cycle portrays the venerated and often retold and recast tale of Prince Rāma, a divine incarnation of the Hindu god Viṣṇu. According to the general story line, Rāma was born in ancient Ayodhya to rid the world of the demon king Rāvana. After a valorous childhood and his marriage to the beautiful Sītā, Rāma is offered the throne of his father, Daśaratha. One of the king's wives, Kaikeyī, is convinced by the evil maid-servant Manthara to demand Rāma's banishment and the installation of her son, Bharata, as heir apparent. Daśaratha reluctantly

FIG. 1.
*Kailāsanātha temple,
general view from
northwest, Ellora,
Maharashtra, India,
ca. 750–75.*



FIG. 2.
*Rāmāyaṇa cycle,
southern lower
exterior wall of
sabhā-maṇḍapa.*





FIG. 3.

Rāma and Sītā request permission from Daśaratha to leave Ayodhya. A procession accompanies them as they leave the capital (reads right to left).



FIG. 4.

Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa leave Ayodhya and meet with the brahmans and townspeople on the banks of the Tamasā River (reads right to left).

honors her wishes, and Rāma is exiled into the forest for fourteen years with his wife and his younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa. The trio have many adventures but live happily until Sītā is abducted by Rāvaṇa. Rāma enlists the aid of a monkey and bear army and searches for Sītā. The monkeys discover that she is a prisoner in Rāvaṇa's palace on the island of Lanka. Rāma defeats Rāvaṇa after a fierce and prolonged battle and rescues Sītā. At that point the fourteen-year period is over, and Rāma and Sītā return to Ayodhya to rule their kingdom.

THE RĀMĀYANA CYCLE

The Rāmāyana cycle at Ellora begins at a point toward the end of the second book, the *Ayodhyā*

Kāṇḍa. At the viewer's right end of the top register, Rāma and Sītā are shown requesting permission of King Daśaratha to leave the kingdom (fig. 3). Their departure from Ayodhya is then indicated by a procession of townspeople and brahmans advancing toward the city gate (figs. 3–4). The next scene probably depicts the first night after leaving the kingdom, when they camp on the bank of the Tamasā River and the brahmans and townspeople try to dissuade Rāma from acquiescing to his fourteen-year exile (fig. 4).⁷ Seeking to ease his followers' anguish, the trio sneaks off in the early morning and, continuing southward, they enter the forest kingdom ruled by the chieftain Guha. After spending the night, they cross the Ganges River, where at midstream Sītā vows to return to make a pilgrimage along the Ganges if they survive



FIG. 5.

Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa cross the Ganges and begin their journey (reads right to left).



FIG. 6.

Rāma, Sītā, and Lakṣmaṇa meet Agastya and settle in the Pañcāvatī Glade (reads left to right).



FIG. 7.

The mutilation of Śūrpaṇakhā and her plea to Khara (reads left to right).

their exile (fig. 5). They alight on the far shore and, at the left end of the first register, begin their perilous journey. Shortly thereafter, Rāma's brother Bharata finds the trio and urges Rāma to return to rule the kingdom. Rāma declines the request, and the exiles continue their wandering.

The second register begins on the left at the start of the third book, the *Araṇya Kāṇḍa*. The exiled trio enters into the Dandaka forest, where they meet the great sage Agastya, who advises them to settle in the

Pañcāvatī Glade, most likely located near the Godāvari River in present-day Nasik district, Maharashtra (fig. 6). Their life in the glade is idyllic until Śūrpaṇakhā, the odious demonic sister of the demon-king Rāvaṇa, discovers them and tries to seduce Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa by assuming the form of a beautiful woman and alluringly dancing before them (fig. 7).⁸ When they refuse her advances, she becomes enraged and tries to kill Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa prevents her and, in order to teach her a lesson, then mutilates



FIG. 8.

Khara's army is defeated by Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa (reads left to right).



FIG. 9.

The pursuit of the golden deer (reads right to left).



FIG. 10.

Rāvaṇa kidnaps Sītā and kills the valiant vulture Jaṭāyu (reads right to left).

her by cutting off her nose and ears. Śūrpaṇakhā resumes her demonic form and flees to plead with her brother Khara, the demonic overlord of the forest, to kill the trio and avenge her disfigurement (fig. 8). Khara and his army attack Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, but they are no match for the virtuous brothers and are killed in the futile attempt.

The third register begins on the right after Śūrpaṇakhā has fled to Rāvaṇa's palace. Rāvaṇa is incensed and contrives a plot for a demon named Māriča to enter the Pañcāvatī Glade disguised as a

golden deer. When Sītā sees the deer, she is entranced and asks Rāma to catch it for her (fig. 9). Rāma chases it into the forest and shoots it with an arrow. Before it dies, it reverts to its true demonic form and, imitating Rāma's voice, calls out for help. Sītā falls for the ruse and orders Lakṣmaṇa to go to the aid of his brother. With Sītā unguarded, Rāvaṇa enters the glade disguised as a holy man and abducts her in a flying chariot (fig. 10). Jaṭāyu, an aged vulture, tries to rescue Sītā but is killed by Rāvaṇa. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa then return to the glade and begin to

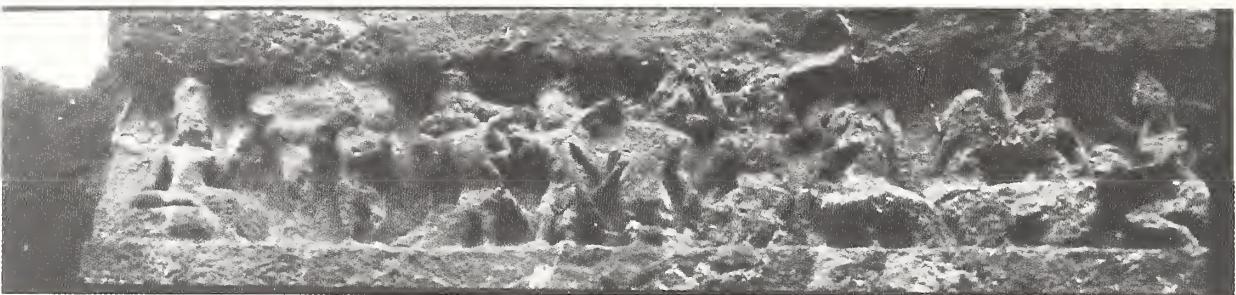


FIG. 11.

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa return to the Pañcavatī Glade and begin to search for Sītā (reads right to left).



FIG. 12.

Rāma shoots an arrow through the seven trees and Sugrīva and Vāli fight (reads left to right).

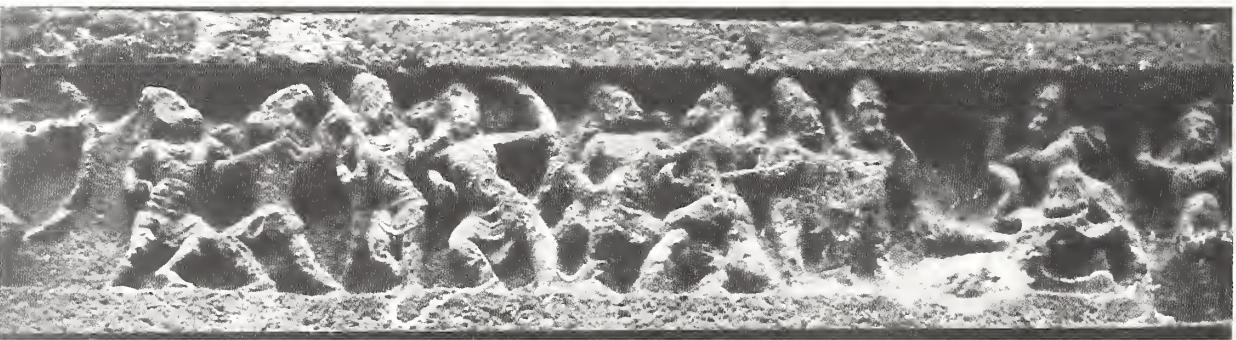


FIG. 13.

Rāma kills Vāli (reads left to right).

search for Sītā (fig. 11). They are told by the celestial Danu to ask the monkey race for assistance.

The fourth register begins on the left at the start of the fourth book, the *Kiśkindhā Kāṇḍa*. Rāma is shown proving his might to the monkeys by shooting an arrow through seven trees and the seven worlds (fig. 12). The monkeys accept Rāma and tell him the

tale of Sugrīva, who was wronged by his brother, the monkey king Vāli. Rāma agrees to help Sugrīva and shoots Vāli with an arrow during a fratricidal fight between the two simians (fig. 13). Vāli falls dying and tells his grieving wife Tārā and the rest of the monkeys to obey Sugrīva, who is then crowned by Rāma (fig. 14).⁹

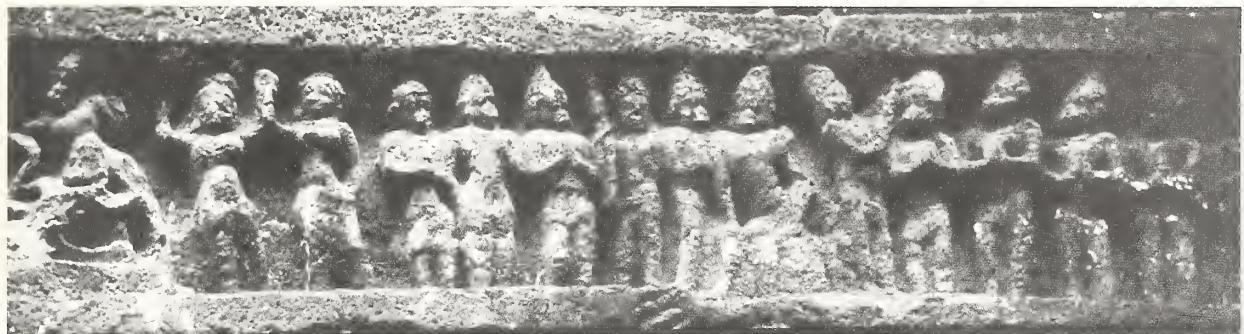


FIG. 14.
Sugrīva is crowned by Rāma (reads left to right).

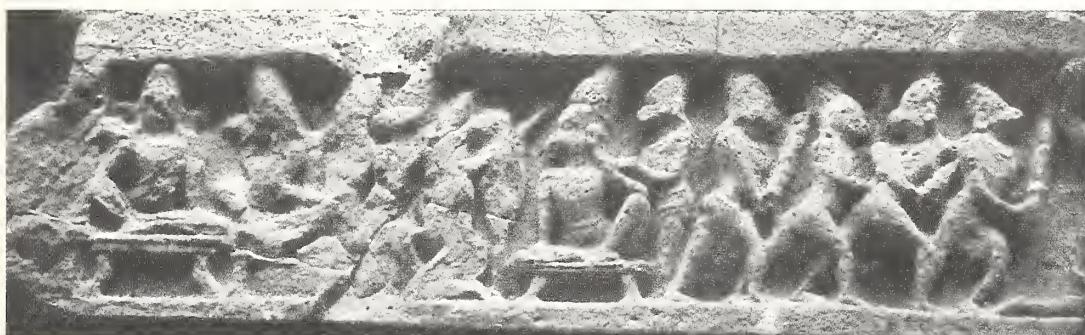


FIG. 15.
Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa pass the rainy season in the shelter of Mount Prasravaṇa (reads left to right).



FIG. 16.
Angada slays a great demon (reads left to right).

The fifth register begins on the left with the advent of the rainy season, which forces Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to wait out the storms in the shelter of Mount Prasravaṇa (fig. 15). When dry weather returns, Lakṣmaṇa goes to the Kiśkindhā forest to find Sugrīva. They decide on their strategy and send out search parties in the four directions. As the southern

search party starts out, the monkey-prince Angada slays a great demon (fig. 16). Then the party enters a magical cave and emerges at the tip of India. The fourth book of the *Rāmāyāna* ends here, with Hanumān, the monkey-general, on a mountain summit preparing to leap to Lanka to try to find Sītā. The fifth book, the *Sundara Kāṇḍa*, opens at the right



FIG. 17.

Hanumān leaps across the ocean and destroys the ogress Siṅhikā on his way to Lanka (reads left to right).

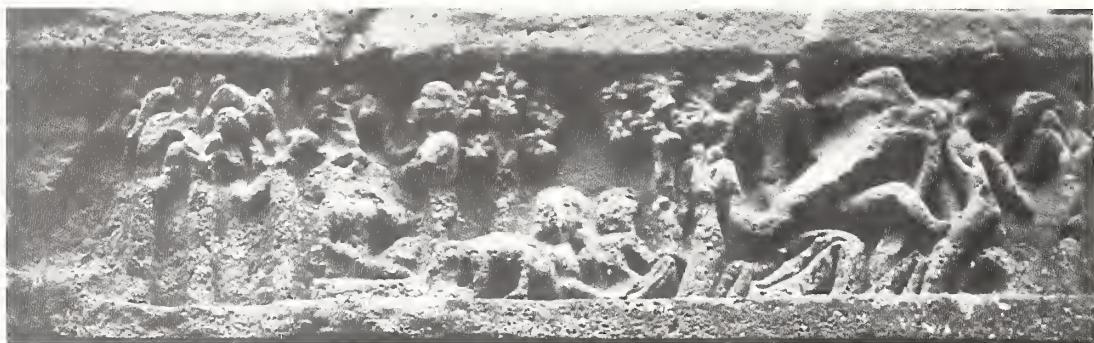


FIG. 18.

Hanumān finds Sītā in the Aśoka Forest and gives her Rāma's ring (reads left to right).



FIG. 19.

Hanumān allows himself to be captured by Rāvaṇa's forces and taunts the demon king by coiling his tail to form a throne higher than Rāvaṇa's throne (reads left to right).

end of the fifth register with Hanumān leaping over the ocean to Lanka (fig. 17). On the way he is attacked by the formidable ogress Siṅhikā but defeats her and continues on his mission.

The sixth register begins on the left with Hanumān finding Sītā in the Aśoka Forest in Rāvaṇa's compound and giving her Rāma's ring to

prove his identity and trustworthiness (fig. 18). Hanumān then wreaks havoc on the capital city but allows himself to be captured in order to meet the great Rāvaṇa. He is taken before the ten-headed and twenty-armed demonic king and taunts him with belittling words and by coiling his tail to form a throne higher than Rāvaṇa's throne (fig. 19). Enraged,



FIG. 20.

Rāvaṇa orders Hanumān's tail set on fire, but Hanumān escapes from the palace and sets the city of Lanka ablaze with his burning tail (reads left to right).



FIG. 21.

Hanumān rejoins the search party in the Honey Forest, and they return to Rāma and Laksuaya (reads left to right).



FIG. 22.

The monkeys carry boulders to build a bridge to Lanka (reads left to right).

Rāvaṇa orders Hanumān's tail set on fire. Hanumān escapes from the palace and sets the city on fire with his burning tail, which causes the elephants and horses to panic (fig. 20).

The seventh register begins at the left with Hanumān returning from Lanka and rejoicing with the search party by drinking mead in the Honey For-

est (fig. 21). Then the sixth book, the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, opens with the southern search party returning to Rāma and Sugrīva. They unite their forces with an army of bears led by Jāmbavān and proceed to the tip of India, where the monkeys gather boulders to make a bridge to Lanka (fig. 22). The monkeys carry the boulders to Nila, a monkey who could make



FIG. 23.

Nila forms a causeway to Lanka with the boulders (reads left to right).



FIG. 24.

The army has crossed the causeway, and Nila battles the demon-general Prahasta (reads left to right).



FIG. 25.

Hanumān offers the medicinal herbs, and Lakṣmaṇa kills Indrajīt to prevent a power-gaining sacrifice (reads left to right).

objects float on water, and the causeway is built (fig. 23).

The eighth register begins at the left with Rāma's army having crossed over to Lanka and undertaking a series of gruesome magical battles, which are encapsulated by a scene that may be Nila locked in fierce arm-to-arm combat with the demon-general Prahasta

(fig. 24). Then Hanumān is shown as he offers medicinal herbs from Mount Mahodaya in the Himalayas to the stricken Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa (fig. 25). The last scene before the unfinished right end of the final register depicts Lakṣmaṇa in the Nikumbhilā Grove killing Rāvaṇa's son Indrajīt in front of a sacrificial altar and post in order to prevent a power-

gaining sacrifice by the demons.¹⁰ So ends the *Rāmāyaṇa* cycle on the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora.

LITERARY SOURCE

Definitively ascertaining a specific literary source, if any, for the *Rāmāyaṇa* cycle on the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora is beyond the scope of this limited essay. But the high degree of narrative detail used in depicting the story may suggest the use of a written and perhaps illustrated source rather than a more generalized oral tradition. In the interim until future studies can clarify this issue, a preliminary indication based on the registers' visual evidence suggests that the narrative may be based, at least in part, on an early south Indian telling of the tale rather than the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. In the second register of the relief the initially beautiful guise of Śūrpanakhā, instead of her hideous appearance as narrated by Vālmiki, accords with her description in the late twelfth-century Tamil poet Kampan's *Irāmāvatāram* (*patalam* 5; see n. 8). Although Kampan's text post-dates the Kailāsanātha temple,¹¹ it has been suggested that there existed a pre-Kampan south Indian version of the Rāma story,¹² and it is possible that this prior rendition may have been the source for the Ellora relief. Other tellings of the story vary in detail sufficiently to negate a causal origin, including the third-century Bhāsa's *Pratimānāṭaka* and *Abhiṣekanāṭaka*, the fifth-century Kālidāsa's *Uttarārāmāyaṇa*, the eighth-century Bhavabhūti's *Mahāvīra-carita* and *Uttarārāmacarita*, the abbreviated account in the *Mahābhārata*, and those found in various *Purāṇas*. This presumed relation of the Ellora frieze to a pre-Kampan south Indian version of the Rāma story is also supported by the analogous relationship of certain *Kṛṣṇacarita* episodes portrayed on the Kailāsanātha temple's flanking wall *vis-à-vis* the compositions of the ninth-century south Indian Vaishnava saint Periyālvār.¹³

CONCLUSION

The *Rāmāyaṇa* cycle on the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora narrates only six of the eight books comprising

the story. It leaves out the first book, the *Bāla Kāṇḍa*, which describes Rāma's birth, youth, and marriage. The cause and beginning of Rāma's banishment are not shown. Several major episodes from the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa* are omitted, including Rāma's battle with Rāvaṇa's gigantic brother Kumbhakarṇa, Rāma's climactic battle with and destruction of Rāvaṇa, Sītā's purity trial by fire, her exoneration, the trio's triumphant return to Ayodhya, and Rāma's coronation. Finally, the frieze also omits the last book, the *Uttara Kāṇḍa*, in which Sītā's purity is again questioned causing Rāma to abandon her while she was pregnant, the birth of their sons Kuśa and Lava, the boys' singing of the heroic story of Rāma, and Sītā's final exoneration and divine descent into the earth.

Similarly, the flanking *Mahābhārata* frieze on the Kailāsanātha temple is incomplete. The first two books, the *Ādi Parva* and the *Sabhā Parva*, which describe the genealogy of the participants, the Pāṇḍavas' youth, and the cause of their banishment, are bypassed. The majority of the war and the deaths of Bhīṣma, Bhūriśravas, Ghaṭotkacha, Drona, Dulihāsana, Karṇa, Śalya, and Śakuni are not portrayed. The *Mahābhārata* cycle ends in the *Strī Parva* with six books left in the epic, including the lengthy political discourses, the deaths of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Kṛṣṇa, and the Pāṇḍavas' ascent to heaven.

The omissions of the various episodes in the epic reliefs at Ellora may well have been intentional. If the unfinished area of stone at the end of the *Rāmāyaṇa* frieze had been intended to be the scene of Rāma killing Rāvaṇa, the action of the story would have been basically complete. If this hypothesis is correct, the core of both epics would have been presented. Because the cores of the epics are thought to be the earliest and original parts of the stories and the beginning and ending parts later stage-setting and embellishing additions,¹⁴ the commissioners and/or sculptors could have been content to concentrate on the central tale and omit those areas that were perhaps considered less dramatic or less crucial to the story line. Also, the immense length of the epics in relation to the size of the walls on which they are depicted would naturally force the sculptors to be concise. The cycles could not have been originally meant to be continued since the life of Kṛṣṇa registers begin the

narrative at the bottom and because areas for more registers do not seem to have been reserved under either frieze.¹⁵

Numerous temples in India are embellished with *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes, yet none are as extensive or detailed as that gracing the Kailāsanātha temple at Ellora. But then again, no other Hindu monument itself is as lavishly conceived and remarkably executed as the Kailāsanātha temple, the grand edifice about which it is said that even the gods wonder:

[The King Kṛṣṇa I (r. ca. 757–73)] caused to be constructed a temple of a wonderful form on the mountain at Elāpura [Ellora]. When the gods moving in their aerial cars saw it they were struck with wonder and constantly thought much over the matter saying to themselves, “This temple of Śiva is self-existent; for such beauty is not to be found in a work of art.”¹⁶ □

Notes

The original research on this topic was done while I was a graduate student under Professor Spink, so it seems particularly appropriate for inclusion in his tribute volume. Earlier versions of this work were presented at the Third Michigan Conference on South and Southeast Asia, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, 22 May 1982; and at the Association for Asian Studies, Midwest Conference Annual Meeting, Ann Arbor, MI, 11 October 1982. I wish to thank Prof. H. Daniel Smith and Dr. Donald M. Stadtner for making a number of valuable comments on earlier versions of this essay. All photographs accompanying this article were taken by me.

1. General descriptions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes at Ellora, varying in some places from the identifications proposed here, are given in Ramesh Shankar Gupte and B. D. Mahajan, *Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad Caves* (Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1962), 209; P. Banerjee, *Rama in Indian Literature Art & Thought*, 2 vols. (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1986), 1:241; and Cathleen Cummings, “The *Ramayana* Narrative Panel at Ellora’s Kailasanatha Temple,” paper presented at the American Council for Southern Asian Art Symposium VIII, Charleston, SC, 31 October 1998.

2. John Stratton Hawley, “Scenes from the Childhood of Kṛṣṇa

on the Kailāsanātha Temple, Ellora,” *Archives of Asian Art* 34 (1981): 74–90.

3. See David Theron Sanford, “Early Temples Bearing *Rāmāyaṇa* Relief Cycles in the Chola Area: A Comparative Study” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1974); and Kirsti Evans, *Epic Narratives in the Hoysala Temples: The Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Bhāgavata Purāṇa in Halebid, Belur and Amṛatapura* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997).

4. The first four registers are arranged in a boustrophedon configuration beginning at the top right and proceeding to the left, then reversing direction for the next lower register, then returning to the original direction, and so on. The directional arrangement is then changed at the beginning of the fifth register so that the fifth through eighth registers all read from left to right. See n. 9 for a possible reason for the change of direction. The *Mahābhārata* cycle is entirely depicted in registers of alternating direction and, like its mate, begins at the end of the top register closest to the main body of the temple.

5. Hawley, “Childhood of Kṛṣṇa,” 74. Hawley dates the *Harivamśa* to the second century A.D. and states that “The relief carvings at Ellora bear a close relation to . . . the Harivamśa, much closer than usually pertains between text and image in narrative Krishna friezes.”

6. Hawley, “Childhood of Kṛṣṇa,” 78.

7. While the scene immediately following the city gate is sometimes interpreted as Rāma’s brother Bharata trying to persuade him to return to Ayodhya to rule the kingdom after Daśaratha’s death from grief and the following scene as the trio crossing the Sarayū River, the prominence of the depiction of Rāma and Sītā in the boat suggests that this is the Ganges River, where Sītā makes her vow, rather than the inconsequential crossing of the Sarayū, and therefore the previous scene cannot be Bharata’s visit to Rāma but must be the brahmans’ and townspeople’s entreaty to Rāma. For the alternative interpretation, see Gupte and Mahajan, *Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad Caves*; and Banerjee, *Rama in Indian Literature*. Note that the current description of this scene also differs from Hawley’s interpretation. See Hawley, “Childhood of Kṛṣṇa,” 89, n. 11.

8. The initially beautiful appearance of Śūrpaṇakhā in the relief, instead of the ugly one as narrated in Vālmiki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*, accords with the south Indian tradition as recounted in the twelfth century by the Tamil poet Kampai in his *Irāmāvatāram* (*paṭalam* 5). See Hari Prasad Shastri, trans., *The Ramayana of Valmiki*, 3 vols. (London: Shanti Sadan, 1957), 2:38–40; George L. Hart and Hank Heifetz, trans., *The Forest Book of the Rāmāyaṇa of Kampai* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 84–98; C. Rajagopalachari, *Ramayana* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1979), 135–43; and Kathleen M. Erndl, “The Mutilation of Śūrpaṇakhā,” in *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South*

Asia, ed. Paula Richman (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 67–88.

9. At this point in the depiction of the narrative, directly beneath the fallen Vāli in the middle of the fourth register, there is a drop in the level of the groundline and a resultant slight increase in the height and proportions of the figures. Cummings, “Ramayana Narrative Panel,” argues this transition indicates a shift in the focus of the narrative from Rāma to Hanumān and possibly a temporal interruption in the carving of the frieze.

10. While this last scene has been previously interpreted as that of Rāma killing Rāvaṇa, the presence of the sacrificial altar and post indicates that it is actually Indraji’s death since it is he and not his father Rāvaṇa who attempts the sacrifice. See Gupte and Mahajan, *Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad Caves*; and Banerjee, *Rama in Indian Literature*.

11. Hart and Heifetz, *Forest Book*, 2.

12. Sanford, “Early Temples Bearing *Rāmāyāna* Relief Cycles,” 25–28. See also n. 8.

13. Hawley, “Childhood of Kṛṣṇa,” 87.

14. Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, trans.

V. Srinivasa Sarma (1908; rpt. ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsi das, 1981), 475–80.

15. During the question and response session after the presentation of Cathleen Cummings’ paper on the *Rāmāyāna* relief (see n. 1), several additional possible reasons for why the relief is unfinished were raised by the speaker and members of the audience. These include the supposition that the final scene(s) may have been once painted (suggested by Cathleen Cummings), that it was considered inauspicious to show the death of Rāvaṇa (suggested by Dr. Cecelia Levin), that South Asian rulers do not generally patronize scenes showing the death of another king (suggested by Prof. John Cort), and that because the *Rāmāyāna* cycle is immediately beside the large representation of Rāvaṇa shaking Mt. Kailasa, it would be inappropriate to depict his death (suggested by Dr. Robert J. Del Bontà). For a discussion of incomplete works of art in India and Indonesia, see Joanna Williams, “Unfinished Images,” *India International Centre Quarterly* 13.1 (1986): 90–105.

16. From the Baroda Grant of Kṛṣṇa I. See Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, *Early History of the Dekkan: Down to the Mahomedan Conquest*, 2nd ed. (1895; rpt. ed. New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1983), 64.

Themes of Kṛṣṇa

Sharing the Load of the Lord: Crossing the Yamunā

THE EXCHANGE OF KRŚNA for the infant daughter of Yaśodā in the dark of night centers on the human drama of a mother and father protecting their child. Indeed, the “exchange” is the only episode in the celebrated biography of Krśna (*Kṛṣṇacarita*) in which the spotlight falls not upon the child-god but upon the daring actions of Krśna’s parents, Vasudeva and Devakī, and his adopted guardians, Nanda and Yaśodā. Each of the major surviving Sanskrit biographies treats the exchange episode somewhat differently, but one feature uniting them all is that Vasudeva alone transfers the children to and fro across the Yamunā River, undetected by others deep in sleep. It is therefore surprising to observe that north Indian sculptors added other actors who shared key roles in implementing the transfer of the children.

The earliest biography of Krśna is found in the *Harivaniśa*, considered an appendix to the *Mahābhārata* and usually dated to the first three centuries of the Common Era. Expanding upon the episodes in the *Harivaniśa* were later Purāṇic versions, notably the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* and *Brahmapurāṇa*, both probably dating to the fifth century. But by far the best-known *Kṛṣṇacarita* in India today is the tenth book of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, probably composed in south India between the ninth and tenth centuries but which drew upon certain north Indian conventions. Other Purāṇas also touch upon Krśna, but they are usually sharply abbreviated summaries. For example, the précis in the *Agnipurāṇa* omits even the river-crossing incident in its treatment of the exchange of children by Vasudeva.¹

The differing textual traditions describing the transfer of the children provided artisans with rich,

vivid imagery. In the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, for example, Vasudeva wades into the rising Yamunā River until the river nearly engulfs him in full spate. The water subsides only after Krśna’s foot enters the river from the basket in which he is being carried on his father’s head. After the crossing, Vasudeva then enters Nanda’s house in Gokula and exchanges Krśna for the daughter of Nanda and Yaśodā while the household remains asleep. In the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, however, the Yamunā never rises above Vasudeva’s knees, the waters quieted by divine intervention. The transfer occurs not in Gokula but in the temporary encampment of Nanda and Yaśodā, which Vasudeva spots on the very riverbank. In the earliest source, the *Harivaniśa*, the Yamunā River is left out altogether, and the exchange occurs in the camp of Nanda and Yaśodā in an unspecified location near Mathura, without a dramatic river-crossing. Although these versions differ greatly, each agrees that it is Vasudeva alone who exchanges the children, unobserved and unaided by Nanda and Yaśodā. He is the prime mover in this tense drama, shifting silently back and forth undetected, even by his own wife Devakī in Mathura. In Gokula Yaśodā awakes the next morning believing that the male child beside her is the very child to whom she gave birth. North Indian sculptors in the ancient period, however, generally eschewed the basic story line, since Vasudeva is often assisted by other principal actors. The two fathers are often shown together, for example, appearing to have exchanged their offspring at the riverbank. In some cases, Krśna is even conveyed directly into the arms of a very wide awake and expressive Yaśodā.

One example featuring Yaśodā suckling Krśna illustrates how medieval sculptors ignored the standard

FIG. 1.
Yaśodā suckling Kṛṣṇa,
Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh, ca.
tenth–eleventh century.
Lucknow Provincial Museum,
Lucknow. Photo: American
Institute of Indian Studies.



FIG. 2.
Kṛṣṇa frieze,
Thakur's
palace,
Sohagpur,
Madhya
Pradesh, ca.
late tenth–
eleventh
centuries.
Photo: author.



literary narrative. At the top of the panel in the center two men are seen exchanging a child (fig. 1). In the damaged portion of the frieze stood another male figure, exchanging a child with a figure that is now missing. Devotees beholding this relief were probably not meant to distinguish one father from the other or the tiny daughter from the son, but the presence of men passing a child between them was enough to signify the “exchange.”² In another medieval example depicting Yaśodā suckling Kṛṣṇa, it is the deity Brahmā who nestles Kṛṣṇa in his arms, as if mimicking the roles assigned to Vasudeva and Nanda.³

In some stone works sculptors deliberately distinguished the two fathers by placing Nanda on the right bank of the Yamunā, conforming to the usual narrative flow from left to right in medieval sculpture. The clean-shaven Vasudeva appears on the left

of the river, child in arms, while on the other side, turning toward home in the opposite direction, is Nanda carrying Kṛṣṇa (fig. 2). Nanda is clearly shown bearded, to help distinguish him from Vasudeva. The Yamunā River cleverly overlaps diagonally into the niche below, where Kṛṣṇa is shown within the river astride the defeated snake-demon Kāliya. In the neighboring niche on the left Kaṁsa smashes Yaśodā’s tiny daughter on a rock. At the top of this same niche appears the daughter again, transformed into the Great Goddess, who is evoked with vivid imagery in the majority of the *Kṛṣṇacaritas*.⁴

In another example, the Yamunā again separates the two men, who each bear a child. Nanda, assuming his usual position on the right bank, is marked by his beard (fig. 3). At his feet are two cows that reinforce the pastoral setting of Gokula. Vasudeva



FIG. 3.

Kṛṣṇa frieze, Padhavali, Madhya Pradesh, ca. tenth century. Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.



FIG. 4.

Pillar with *Kṛṣṇa* scenes, Gnrh, Madhya Pradesh, ca. tenth century. Photo: author.

holds a standing child, presumably Kṛṣṇa, while in the hands of his counterpart is a seated child, who is probably Yaśodā's daughter. In this long frieze, Vasudeva is depicted again, on the far left, departing from an open door, child in hand. Above Devakī's couch stands a male figure holding a sword who is probably one of Vasudeva's attendants and not one of Kaiśīsa's guards. This armed servant appears now and then in other depictions, furnishing protection for Vasudeva on his nocturnal mission.⁵



FIG. 5.

Pillar with *Kṛṣṇa* scenes (another side of fig. 4). Photo: author.

In another example, a four-sided pillar comprised of twenty-eight niches, Vasudeva carries a child, while two guards are shown asleep before an open door, a feature known to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* alone (fig. 4). Immediately above the scene is Devakī suckling, while Kaiśīsa hurls the infant daughter to her death in the niche above. (The Great Goddess is not shown here.) On the opposite side of the pillar (fig. 5) is Vasudeva again, holding a child, recognized by the same armed male attendant referred to in the



FIG. 6.
Kṛṣṇa frieze, Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, tenth century. Archaeological Museum. Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.



FIG. 7.
Vasudeva and Yaśodā exchanging infants, Deogarh, Uttar Pradesh, ca. A.D. 520–50. Photo: American Institute of Indian Studies.



FIG. 8.
*Vasudeva delivering Kṛṣṇa to Yaśodā, Bhitari, Uttar Pradesh, ca. A.D. 500. Banaras Hindu University, Department of Archaeology. Photo: After Pramod Chandra, *The Sculpture of India: 3000 B.C.–1300 A.D.* (Cambridge, MA, 1985), 91.*

aforementioned relief (see fig. 3). In the niche above is Yaśodā suckling Kṛṣṇa. The stacked pots marking a simple village home contrast with the interior of Devaki's apartment. In the niche above is a squatting image of Pūtanā with Kṛṣṇa at her breast, a poignant foil to the motherly suckling scene below.⁶

Another medieval narrative relief is neatly divided into two equal sections. Incidents prior to the exchange occur in the left half, while episodes in the

right half are devoted to events after Kṛṣṇa reached the home of his foster parents (fig. 6). To the right of the recumbent Devaki is a female servant presenting Kṛṣṇa to Vasudeva. Next to Vasudeva is the same armed male who accompanies him on his mission to the river. The guard's body is poised to depart toward the Yamunā, but he twists his head to witness the exchange taking place behind him. In this frieze, the river and Nanda are omitted, but the episodes in



FIG. 9.

Kṛṣṇa panel within the porch of Caturbhuj temple, Gwalior fort, Madhya Pradesh, A.D. 875. Photo: author.



FIG. 10.

Pillar with Kṛṣṇa scenes, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh (originally from Tumain), eighth century (?). Archaeological Museum. Photo: author.

Gokula commence immediately with Kṛṣṇa's butter theft.⁷

All of these examples belong to the medieval period and north India, specifically Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, but such departures from the literary record began as early as the Gupta period, if not before. The best known are stone panels from Deogarh that form part of the plinth of the Daśavatāra

temple. One relief likely features Devakī presenting Kṛṣṇa to Vasudeva, while a second probably illustrates Vasudeva and Yaśodā themselves exchanging their children (fig. 7). Two fragmentary sculptures at Deogarh also depict a male holding a child in this fashion, suggesting that at least two additional stages in the narrative were planned originally.⁸

Another Gupta-period example was recovered at Bhitari, near Varanasi. In this panel it is probably Vasudeva who delivers Kṛṣṇa to the welcoming arms of Yaśodā (fig. 8). Vasudeva's garment covers his entire head, suggesting his concealment during his hazardous mission. Significantly, Vasudeva is once again accompanied by an armed attendant, implying that this somewhat common medieval-period motif had much earlier origins.⁹

Transitional between the Gupta and late medieval periods is a relief inside the porch of the rock-cut Caturbhuj temple, Gwalior, dated by an inscription to A.D. 875 (fig. 9). Vasudeva and Nanda facing each other, each holding a child, are placed next to the Pūtanā incident; the figure on the right is bearded, indicating Nanda. On the other side are two men with swords, presumably guards stationed before Vasudeva's quarters. The narrative begins with a man (Vasudeva) or a woman (Devakī) emerging from an open doorway grasping a child, Kṛṣṇa. The chief significance of this panel is that it proves that the tradition of linking the two fathers together at the time of the exchange had begun by the ninth century, with or without the Yamunā as a backdrop.¹⁰ Another example datable to the transitional period depicts a doorway before which is a standing male with a child, either Nanda or Vasudeva. On the other side of the

FIG. 11.

Scenes from the Life of Kṛṣṇa
(detail of the exchange of the
children), India, Madhya
Pradesh, Datia, eighteenth
century, opaque watercolor,
gold, and iuk on paper, sheet:
 $12\frac{1}{2} \times 18\frac{3}{8}$ in. (31.8×46.7
cm), image: $11 \times 16\frac{1}{2}$ in.
(27.9×41.9 cm). Los Angeles
County Museum of Art, gift of
Marilyn Walter Grounds,
M.81.272.2. Photo: Los
Angeles County Museum of Art.



door appears Yaśodā holding a child, recognizable from the two cows placed to her side (fig. 10).¹¹

This small sampling of sculptures suggests that artists were scarcely governed by the surviving *Kṛṣṇacaritas*, which specified that Vasudeva conducted the transfer of children alone and unobserved. Perhaps sculptors were inspired by witnessing local dramatic performances in which the basic story was altered by staging a real physical exchange of infants between the two fathers. After all, if Vasudeva encountered no one on his secret visit, there would be less room for tense emotion surrounding the parting of children from parents. Nanda's participation in the transfer, however, automatically changes another important element in the standard narrative, since he would be fully aware of the identity of the child that he and Yaśodā are about to raise. Indeed, such sculptural renditions, in which Nanda is a conscious participant in the exchange, are strong evidence for an enduring alternative narrative tradition in north India that is not represented in the available texts. Indeed, if viewers of the sculpture expected that Vasudeva alone exchanged the children, then the aforementioned depictions in stone would be puzzling, if not disturbing. That certain nontextual traditions remained current long after the medieval period is proved by certain Indian painting. In this example from Datia (fig. 11), two different fathers appear at the river's edge, running completely counter to the known texts.¹² As a measure of the basic story's fluidity, there arose a variant in north India that held

that Yaśodā gave birth to twins (Kṛṣṇa and a daughter) and that the male child delivered by Vasudeva "entered" (*pravisad*) the body of Kṛṣṇa.¹³

By the medieval period, the "exchange" was associated with a number of narrative motifs, such as the river, a bearded Nanda holding a child, a clean-shaven Vasudeva with a child followed by an armed attendant, and Vasudeva departing secretly from his quarters. Other episodes in Kṛṣṇa's life, however, were treated by the late medieval period with far greater brevity and standardization, requiring only one "frame" of action. For example, it was enough to depict a standing Kṛṣṇa holding two flanking trees to symbolize the uprooting of the twin Arjuna trees, felled by a mortar dragged between them by a crawling Kṛṣṇa; by the medieval period, the presence of the mortar was unnecessary (figs. 2, 3, and 6). Or placing Kṛṣṇa in proximity to one or two wheels and an axle was enough for viewers to capture the caper in which Kṛṣṇa upturns a complete wagon (figs. 2, 3, and 9). Medieval artists therefore rendered these incidents by highlighting a single peak moment, such as Kṛṣṇa's defeating the horse-demon with his outstretched elbow (figs. 3 and 6). The "exchange" probably resisted such simplification and codification because the incident itself had greater narrative complexity, involving a number of characters in potentially three distinct "settings" (that is, Mathura, the Yamunā and its banks, and Gokula). Added to this complexity was some disagreement about even the "facts" of the transfer, recorded in the various

texts mentioned above; by its very nature, the “exchange” was more susceptible to interpretation than, say, the defeat of Pūtanā or the wrestling of the bull Ariṣṭa. The divergences between the sculptural examples and the textual traditions may at first glance appear superficial, but they are really major departures from the standard story line in which Vasudeva acts alone.

The numerous steps by which the “exchange” evolved in north India can be fixed only by the discovery of many more examples, which will also likely reveal regional and/or temporal differences. But with more evidence it may be possible to interpret the complex interchange between the stone-working ateliers, the surviving texts, and lost popular traditions, which can perhaps be reconstructed on the basis of the sculpture. At this stage, however, it seems that once again stone workers marched to their own tune. □

sort, ed. John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff (Berkeley: Berkeley Religious Studies Series, 1982), 1–12.

5. Stadtner, “Medieval Narrative Sculpture,” fig. 4. An armed attendant also accompanies Vasudeva at Osian; see Michael Meister, “Kṛṣṇalilā from Wadhwan and Osian,” *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, n.s. 5 (1972–73): pl. XV, 9.

6. See Donald M. Stadtner, “The Tradition of Kṛṣṇa Pillars in North India,” *Archives of Asian Art* 40 (1987): 56–68, figs. 1–2.

7. This relief may have functioned as a lintel. See Stadtner, “Medieval Narrative Sculpture,” fig. 5. A medieval example that appears to involve only Vasudeva in the transfer occurs in a narrative frieze built into the fabric of the Qutb Mosque, Delhi; see Kirsti Evans, “The Birth of Krishna Visually Retold on the Qutb Mosque Lintel,” *South Asian Studies* 14 (1998): 119–26.

8. See M.S. Vats, *The Gupta Temple at Deogarh*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, no. 70 (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1952), pls. XVIIIa, XIXa, and XXId,f. That the second female almost certainly is Yaśodā is suggested by a figure dressed in an identical fashion observing Kṛṣṇa upturning the cart in another panel at Deogarh, pl. XVIIIb. This long skirt (Hindi: *lahaṅga*) and distinctive tunic probably distinguished her from the courtly Devakī.

9. See Pramod Chandra, *The Sculpture of India: 3000 B.C.–1300 A.D.* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 90–91.

10. The relief is heavily braided, but it is possible that the standing figure opposite the bearded Nanda is female.

11. This pillar, perhaps dating from the eighth century, was recovered from Tumain and is now in the Archaeological Museum, Gwalior (museum no. 327). Two similar pillars are found in the vicinity of the Vijayamaṇḍala temple, Vidisha.

12. That there are two different individuals at the river’s edge is proven by the fact that the figure on the left has a tiny spot of hair protruding from beneath his headgear, while the other figure does not. This minor variation depicted in this detail is consistently repeated in the other depictions of the two men within the same painting, conclusively proving that the artist intended to represent the two fathers. I wish to thank Dr. Stephen Markel at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art for drawing my attention to this significant feature.

13. Allan Keislar, “‘New’ Developments in Kṛṣṇa Lilā not found in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, as Discussed by Gaudiya Commentators,” *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 2/3 (Summer 1994): 141–71. The sixteenth-century text is the *Laghu-bhāgavatāṇyta*. This unusual variation was created to bolster the claim that Kṛṣṇa had never once stepped out of the Braj region.

Notes

1. For a review of the major *Kṛṣṇacaritas*, see John Stratton Hawley, *Krishna: The Butter Thief* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). For specific Purāṇic references and illustrations, see Benjamin Preciado-Solis, *The Kṛṣṇa Cycle in the Purāṇas* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1984). I would like to thank my colleague, Dr. B. Preciado-Solis, El Colegio de Mexico, for many helpful insights.

2. In this relief from Kannauj, ca. tenth–eleventh centuries, the man bearing the child is bearded; the faceless figure opposite appears to have also been depicted with a beard, but it is uncertain.

3. This panel from Hinglajgarh, ca. tenth century, is preserved in the Central Museum, Indore; see American Institute of Indian Studies, Photo Archives, neg. 317-31.

4. This relief is also published in Donald M. Stadtner, “Medieval Narrative Sculpture and Three Kṛṣṇa Panels,” *Ars Orientalis* 17 (1987): 117–35, fig. 1. Some students of religion stress the creation of the Great Goddess at the time of “exchange,” but curiously she is not often depicted in connection with the *Kṛṣṇacarita*; see Charlotte Vaudeville, “Krishna Gopala, Radha and the Great Goddess,” in *The Divine Cou-*

Loves of Rādhā in the Rasikapriyā Verses and Paintings

MONG THE MOST FREQUENTLY illustrated Indian texts dealing with the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa romance is the *Rasikapriyā*, a Braj text on poetics. Written by Keśavdās, the court poet of Orcchā and one of the most prominent writers of the *rīti kāvya* tradition, the *Rasikapriyā* is less about the devotional aspects of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa literature than about the literary nuances. While it is well known that Keśav and other poets of his generation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used the episodes and examples of the traditional romance between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to epitomize archetypal notions of lovers, the shift of focus in how Rādhā was to be understood is much less studied. In celebration of Walter Spink's passion for the poetic in the Kṛṣṇa stories, this brief study examines the images of Rādhā in the *Rasikapriyā* verses and illustrations. Changes in the portrayal of Rādhā, as articulated in the *Rasikapriyā*, have significant implications for later literary traditions.¹

The most poignant portrayals of Rādhā generally emerge from the illustrations of such texts as the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Gitāgovinda*, where we see Rādhā pining for her lover or distressed by his actions as he pursues other women. By and large, our understanding of Rādhā is colored by the literature on the *Bhakti* tradition, which emphasizes her position as a *parakīyā nāyikā*, the married heroine who belongs to another but pines for Kṛṣṇa, the symbol of a longing soul who yearns to be united with the divine spirit of Kṛṣṇa. It is generally assumed that even in the later texts, such as the *Rasikapriyā*, Rādhā, an archetypal heroine, is simultaneously the heroine of the *Bhakti* tradition and of the court po-

etic tradition. That there is an indelible shift in emphasis from the devotional to the courtly depictions of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa romance is less understood. In the *rīti kāvya* literature, especially the *Rasikapriyā*, this means that Rādhā, the archetypal heroine, is used to exemplify the ideal form of connection to Kṛṣṇa.

Rather than depicting her as a *parakīyā* heroine, Keśav, on the whole, presents her as a *svakīyā*, the one to whom Kṛṣṇa belongs wholeheartedly. If she is separated from him, it is only temporarily, for as archetypal lovers they are connected forever. The emphasis on the idealized image of Rādhā serves to make her more abstract and objectified as well as perhaps less human.

To better understand this shift, it is useful to study the representations of different forms of *nāyikās* in chapters three and seven of the *Rasikapriyā* and to examine the specific references to Rādhā. The third chapter classifies heroines according to physical attributes, age, experience, and behavior toward the *nāyakas*. The seventh chapter describes *nāyikās* in the context of various love situations and in terms of their psychological attitudes toward their lovers. In both chapters, some verses specifically refer to Rādhā either by name or by family association, such as "daughter of Brishbhanu." For example, in discussing the physical types—*padminī*, *chitrinī*, *sankhini*, and *hastini*—Keśavdās refers to Rādhā only in the ideal heroine form, *padminī*:

When speaking, she so sweetly smiles, it seems
the fragrant flowers would fall!
Subtle in the art of flirting, she is wise in all the
arts of love.

FIG. 1.
Sankhīnī nāyikā, a
page from the
illustrated set of the
Rasikapriyā, Mewar,
Rajasthan, India,
ca. 1700.
Government
Museum, Udaipur.



Neither the snake maidens, nor the celestial nymphs nor the singing girls,
Match her beauty; they seem but vulgar when placed against her.
Says Keśavdās, for her I die, the creation of Brahmā, one of a kind, the darling of Braja.
Around this daughter of Brishbhanu, who is like the delicate bud of the champa flower, many swarm around with thousand hopes like the black bees. (III, 4)²

The descriptions of *sankhīnī* and *hastinī*, on the other hand, suggest that the ideal heroine is complaining about Kṛṣṇa's attraction to these less-than-desirable types of heroines. For example, in the verse for the *sankhīnī* (fig. 1), the *padminī nāyikā* uses the example of a camel who does not appreciate the grove of *champā* flowers (direct reference to the simile used in the verse for *padminī*) but would rather go to the less desirable thorny bushes. Here the camel is equated with the hero and the thorny bush with the *sankhīnī nāyikā*, who is short-tempered, clever, inclined to perspiration, and impatient for sexual pleasures, clearly not as pure and beautiful as the *champā* flower. In other words, other less desirable heroines are described from the perspective of *padminī* Rādhā.

The next mention of Rādhā comes in the verse

describing the *svakiyā nāyikā*, who loves her husband with all her heart, whose youth shines from afar, and whose fortune and bliss in marriage are apparent to all—*madhyā ārudhayovana nāyikā* (III, 34). Once again, here Rādhā is described as a beautiful woman who looks like a heavenly damsel, with perfect features (forehead like the half moon, arches like a perfect bow, etc.), golden body, and a beautiful body fragrance. Significantly, the verses that describe nubile young heroines who are inexperienced in the art of love-making, or manipulative mature heroines (*praudhā*), or those who can count on having Kṛṣṇa only for a brief period of time are never associated with Rādhā. Also in this category of descriptions of Rādhā as pure, mature, and beautiful wife is the verse for the *pādūrbhutamanobhava madhyā* heroine—the one who is inclined toward love-making with body and mind and is adorned with all the signs of love. Here one attendant talks to another:

I have seen such an amazingly beautiful gopī, that I wonder if she really is a cowherdess! Such splendor shone from her body that my eyes remained transfixed on her! No other beautiful women appeal any more; having seen her delicate walk once, I see the beauty of all three worlds. Who could be the husband of such a

beauty, Kāmadeva or Kalānidhī [moon]? No, Kṛṣṇa himself. (III, 38)

Here, Rādhā is very specifically described as the wife of Kṛṣṇa. In most of the verses, whenever she is mentioned by name, she is usually seen as a virtuous court lady with utmost beauty and charm. In verses that deal with specific sexual acts or suggest aggressive behavior or even a great deal of anger, Keśav generally does not refer to Rādhā in a specific way. This is true for all of the categories of *svakiyā nāyikās*, from the young ones (*anūdhā*) and newly married or middle ones (*madhyā*) to the mature heroines (*praudhā*). In each of these categories, there are a number of further divisions. For example, the section on mature heroines (*praudhā*) specifies four types: the one who can give pleasure to any man in a way that he desires (*samastarasakovidā*); the one who is taken in haste to her lovelorn husband who pines for her beauty (*chittavibhramā*); the one who subjugates her husband's mind by speech, deed, and thought (*ākramtiaprandhā*); and the one who is admired by her husband's friends as she admires her own husband (*labdhāyati prandhā*). Among these types the only one who could be seen as without any negative attributes is *labdhāyati prandhā*. It is thus not surprising that this is the only example in which Keśav equates the *nāyikā* explicitly with Rādhā. In a typical fashion, the verse again describes the incomparable beauty of Rādhā and how throughout the three worlds, gods and women bow their heads in awe of her beauty as she sits on a throne with her husband Śrī Kṛṣṇa (III, 58). Right after this section, a series of verses offers examples of mature heroines who manage to act friendly and loving but do not feel that way in their hearts or those who show anger on the exterior but actually feel love for their mates. All of them suggest a certain amount of conflict in a *nāyikā* about her feelings for Kṛṣṇa, the *nāyaka*, and not surprisingly, none of them mentions Rādhā.

Even in the brief section on the *parakiyā nāyikā*, Keśav defines *parakiyā* very differently from the way she is traditionally defined. The one who is admired by all the famous and learned men is called the *parakiyā nāyikā*. In this case, the traditional meaning of a *parakiyā*, as belonging to one and longing for another, takes on a very different connotation.

Here the idea is that she is so virtuous and beautiful that she can be admired even by those who are not married to her. This definition permits another mention of Rādhā as a virtuous heroine. Thus, in the exemplary verse for the unmarried *nāyikā* (*anūdhā*), Keśav once again refers to Rādhā as the lucky (*bhāgyavatī*) unmarried woman playing chess with her friends when she catches a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa and manages to feel a sense of love from Kṛṣṇa's few words while her friends remain unaware of what has just happened (III, 71).

From this analysis of the third chapter verses, it becomes clear that Keśav's descriptions of Rādhā are intended to project her as more virtuous than desirous and more courtly than rural. As Karin Schomer has pointed out, the effort here is to make Rādhā more depersonalized and universalized, a symbol rather than an individual.³ This is not the Rādhā of the *Bhakti* tradition whose pining for Kṛṣṇa creates a sense of longing for the divine in the heart of the devotee. Rather, she is the symbol of an archetypal heroine who can provide a clearer understanding of the *śringāra* poetics for aspiring poets and connoisseurs of poetics.

This tendency to elevate Rādhā beyond her usual psychological portrayal as the longing heroine or the one who is devastated by Kṛṣṇa's affections for other women, and ultimately as the one whom Kṛṣṇa prefers above all others, is further substantiated in the seventh chapter of the *Rasikapriyā*. This is the chapter that has made the *nāyikā* classifications of the *ṛiti kāvya* poets, including Keśavdās, well loved by scholars of literature and painting. It is the chapter that deals with the *nāyikās* in context—in various love situations and in terms of their psychological attitudes toward their lovers. This is the chapter that includes the famous descriptions of the *vāsakasajjā* and *abhisārikā* as well as *khanditā nāyikās*. Significantly, out of more than twenty-five exemplary⁴ verses that describe various *nāyikās*, only five mention Rādhā in any specific way. In most of the instances, her name is associated, once again, with those *nāyikās* whose close connection with Kṛṣṇa is clearly acknowledged. There is no question or doubt about how Rādhā relates to Kṛṣṇa.

For instance, in the exemplary verse for the “hidden” form of *svādhināpatikā nāyikā*,⁵ the one whose

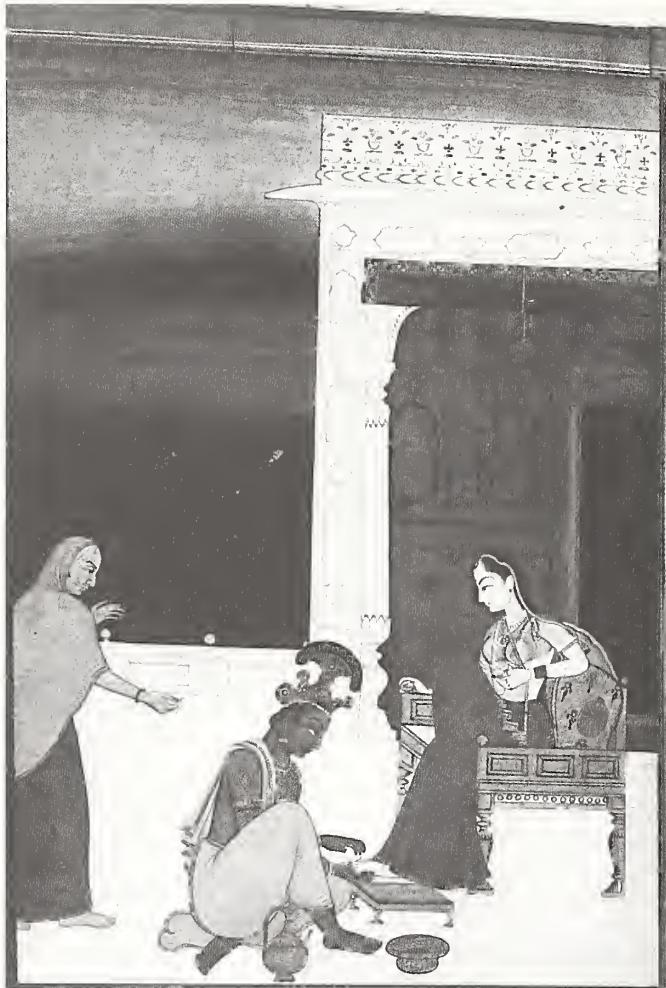


FIG. 2.
Attr. to Nainsukh (ca. 1710–78), *Kṛṣṇa scrubs Rādhā's feet*, a page from the illustrated set of the *Rasikapriyā*, Jammu, Panjab Hills, India, ca. 1760. San Diego Museum of Art, Edwin Binney 3rd Collection, 1990:1224.

husband is completely under her control, Rādhā is described as a daughter of a villager (*gauvārki betī*) who manages to have Kṛṣṇa at her feet (fig. 2). The poet goes on to describe how amazing it is that even as a simple villager she should have someone like Kṛṣṇa—who is the life blood of the villagers of Braj and seen as a god by his own parents—under her control (VI, 5).

Two other references are not as direct but strongly imply that it is Rādhā who is being described. One is the verse describing the “manifest” *svādhinapatikā nāyikā*. Here Rādhā is seen as Kṛṣṇa’s wife, who is thought to be a goddess by her

husband (VII, 6). The poet mentions that while it is common to see women devoted to their husbands, it is not as common to see a husband so devoted to his wife and considering her words as sacred as the Vedas. Similarly, the verse for the manifest form of the *vāsakasajjā*—the one who adorns herself and confidently awaits her lover’s arrival at the predetermined meeting place—refers to Rādhā as the cowherd wife (*gopabādu*; VII, 12). In the previous verse, which describes the “hidden” verse for the *vāsakasajjā*, Rādhā is not mentioned so specifically. Here the *uāyikā* is described as somewhat more anxious: she is seen in an exterior bower as one who is actively and perhaps somewhat anxiously awaiting her lover. She is described as the one who moves with the wind like the light of a lamp and looks like a bird captured in a cage in a bower from whence she is trying to escape (*lini gati tehi kal pānjar-patangkī*; VII, 11). The manifest verse, on the other hand, is far less active or agitated. Full of confidence, she is described as the one who embodies Rati, Kāmadeva’s wife, and the shine of Lakṣmī. She is described as the joyful one, full of desire, and with a sweet body (*komal hasanī, naina-bilasauī, anga-subasanī*; VII, 12). By calling her *gopabādu*, Keśav positions Rādhā as a *svakiyā uāyikā* who is confident of her lover’s return.

The only other verse containing an explicit reference to Rādhā is the verse for the manifest form of *prenābhīsarikā*, who is driven to meet her lover because of her love for him (VII, 28). Other forms of *abhisarikā* are those heroines who are also driven to meet their lovers against all odds, but they are impelled by lust or pride. Interestingly Rādhā is referenced only in the verse in which her motives are pure and clear, and she is once again associated with the manifest form of meeting, the one in which she need not do it indirectly. Here the attendant announces to the *uāyikā* that the lovely cowherd girl, fair as the moon whose grace cannot be hidden, has come back to be with him as she had done the day before, suggesting that this is not a one-time affair but an ongoing relationship. Here one may imagine Rādhā as one of Kṛṣṇa’s wives whom he sees on a regular basis. Once again, the passion of meeting Kṛṣṇa against all odds, where the *abhisarikā* is described as the one who braves storms and dark night and is aided by the lightning to see the road, is not where Keśav



FIG. 3.
Rādhāko prakāśa
sanyoga śringāra
(*Rādhā's manifest
love-in-union*), a
page from an
illustrated set of the
Rasikapriyā,
Mewar, Rajasthan,
India, ca. 1700.
Government
Museum, Udaipur.

refers to Rādhā in a specific way. That type of verse is reserved for the hidden form of the *premābhīsarikā*, in which the *nāyaka* is specifically described as Ghanasyāma (Kṛṣṇa) but remains more generalized (VII, 27).

Similarly, in the verses that describe the *nāyikās* who meet their lovers out of pride or out of the desire to have sex—less than pure motives—Keśav does not associate them in any specific way with Rādhā but leaves those heroines more generic. In the example of the manifest *kamābhīsarikā*, the manifest form of the heroine who goes to meet her lover out of physical desire, the heroine is described as the one who pays no heed to the fact that Kṛṣṇa is seated among the elders, streets are full of children, and women are able to make out the profile of ladies even when their faces are partially covered (VII, 32). Rādhā would not dare to be so impatient, nor would she need to take such an action because she is virtuous, confident, and comfortable with her role as the wife of Kṛṣṇa.

It is useful to examine the descriptions and specific mentions of Rādhā in the chapters that classify the *nāyikās* because they provide the clearest understanding of how the poet intended to portray Rādhā. While she is an archetypal *nāyikā*, and can be understood as embodying all forms of *nāyikās*, Keśav

makes specific reference to her only in those verses that can show her in a noncontroversial or idealized setting. The suggestion that Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's rightful wife is clearly articulated in the first chapter in the exemplary verse for the manifest form of union (*prakāśa sanyoga śringāra*). Here Keśav actually compares the union of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with that of Rāma and Sītā (fig. 3):

Once Sri Kṛṣṇa sat with Rādhā on the same couch with pleasure, and in the mirror held, as he looked to watch the splendor of her face, his eyes filled with tears. In her reflections he saw the red gem on her forehead which seemed to glow [like fire], reminding him of Sitāji sitting in fire, adorned, with her husband's leave. (I, 22)

In this one single verse, Keśav connects Rādhā with Kṛṣṇa as his legitimate wife not only in this lifetime but even in the previous one. In the following verse for love-in-separation (*viyoga śringāra*), since Rādhā or the *nāyikā* is supposed to be speaking about her condition herself, Keśav does not actually refer to the *nāyikā* as Rādhā. We only know this is the condition of Rādhā from the title of the verse: *Śri Rādhikājñ Prakāśa Viyoga Śringāra*, “Rādhā’s manifest love in separation” (I, 25).⁶

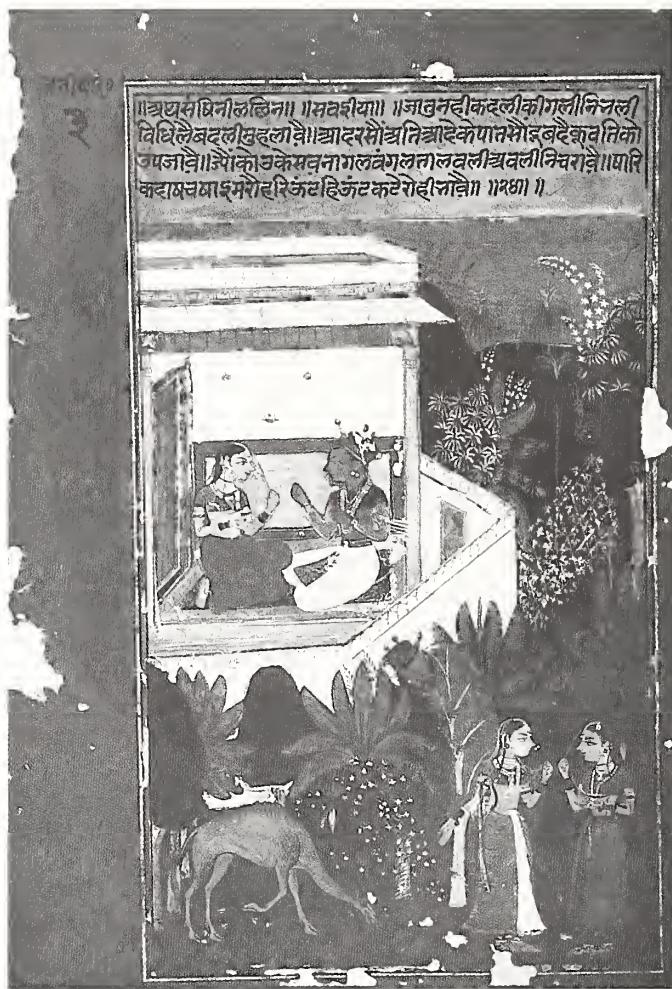


FIG. 4.
Sankhini nāyikā, a page from an illustrated set of the *Rasikapriyā*, Bundi, Rajasthan, India, ca. 1660–80. National Museum, New Delhi.

Generally, it is assumed that in the *riti kāvya* tradition Rādhā as an archetypal heroine is identified with all of the different forms of heroines: she is both a *padmiūī*, a “lotus-woman,” who is moderate in her desire and has a beautiful gait, and a *chitriūī*, the one who is fond of the arts and strong in her desire. She is both a *svādhināpatikā* and a *khanditā* (respectively, the one whose husband is under her control and the one who is jilted by her lover). But a closer analysis of the *nāyikās*’ typology suggests that Keśav is careful to associate with Rādhā only those *nāyikā* types who can show her to be an ideal beauty, of perfect mind and patient demeanor. In other words, Rādhā is portrayed as a generic heroine only when

Kṛṣṇa is also used to exemplify the generic or archetypal hero. Such a depiction of Rādhā takes away much of the emotional resonance from her character in the *riti kāvya* tradition, particularly in the *Rasikapriyā*. Since Keśav’s primary intention in writing the *Rasikapriyā*, as he proclaimed, was to create a *rasika* genre of poetry, which emphasized the rhetorical and literary abilities of the author for the benefit of the *rasikas*, the connoisseurs, it is fair to say that creating a narrative or emotional expression in the text was not the poet’s primary intention. Rather, the text was to be seen as a rhetorical and literary form, in which linguistic structure reigned supreme.

RĀDHĀ IN THE *RASIKAPRIYĀ* PAINTINGS

Analyzing the text in the context of the *riti kāvya* tradition makes it clear that the purpose of the *Rasikapriyā* was neither to narrate the Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā romance nor to create an emotional expression emerging from the *Bhakti* movement. In this sense, the *Rasikapriyā* is quite a different genre from the other popularly illustrated texts, such as the *Gitāgovinda* or the *Sursāgar*. While in its classification system it has some similarities with the *rāgamālā* pictures, it is far more complex in its literary style and overall structure.

Given its fairly complex literary style and content, it is actually surprising that the *Rasikapriyā* was illustrated often at different Rajput courts. Soon after it was written in 1581, it was illustrated for a patron, possibly at the Mughal court, in the subimperial Mughal style. It also became the favorite of Mewar rulers and was illustrated often at Malwa, Bundi, and Bikaner.⁷ The text remained popular at the courts in Punjab Hills as well. It is fair to say that even though some court painters tried to illustrate the complexity inherent in the verses, most of the paintings take their inspiration from the traditional Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā romance stories. Like most other illustrations of Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā, the *Rasikapriyā* illustrations do not provide any special iconography for Rādhā. We identify her only by the way an artist may isolate her from other women or portray her with more jewelry and more distinctive clothing. Thus, without the text, it is not possible to identify the subtle distinctions that Keśav

makes in Rādhā as the rightful wife of Kṛṣṇa versus Rādhā as a more generic heroine.

For example, in a Mewar manuscript of ca. 1700, the image illustrating the verse of “open-love-in-union” (*prakāśa sanyoga śringāra*) distinguishes Rādhā from other women through her golden skirt and additional jewelry. Of course, the fact that she is seated with Kṛṣṇa also immediately identifies her (fig. 3).

The identification of Rādhā is especially difficult when her association with Kṛṣṇa is not clearly defined in the image and the text is also somewhat ambiguous. In two different illustrations of the *sankhīnī nāyikā*, one from Mewar and another from Bundi (figs. 1 and 4), we have to look carefully and understand the context of the verse in order to figure out which figure is Rādhā. *Sankhīnī* is the type of *nāyikā* whose body is moist and hairy, whose love smell is salty, and who delights in explicit sexual activities (*char-gandh-juta, trupta bhuri-bhāgā, suratarati*; III, 9). According to Vishvanath Prasad Mishra, the noted authority on the *Rasikapriyā* and on *rīti* literature, the verse is spoken by the archetypal *nāyikā*, meaning Rādhā as the idealized heroine. In conversation with Kṛṣṇa, she tells him in coded words that going to a *sankhīnī nāyikā* is like a camel always heading toward the thorny bushes out of habit. Relying on Mishra’s interpretation of the verse⁸ to analyze the Mewar illustration would lead us to assume that the woman facing Kṛṣṇa and pointing to the camel is Rādhā. This leaves unclear the identity of the other two figures in the upper right-hand corner. Although not mentioned in the verse, the principal seated figure could be identified as *sankhīnī nāyikā*. But the woman seated under the bower with an attendant seems more courtly and is depicted with more jewelry in an opulent setting. Conceivably, the painter has interpreted the verse somewhat differently. Perhaps he shows Rādhā talking to her attendant and describing Kṛṣṇa’s habit of going to a *sankhīnī*. In that case, the woman talking to Kṛṣṇa would be a *sankhīnī nāyikā*. It is very likely that the painter or composer of the image wanted to ensure that a painting describing the *sankhīnī nāyikā* made a visual reference to her as well. In either interpretation, it is clear that the painter does not abide completely by the text and feels free to interpret and expand upon the spirit of the verse.

Interestingly, a similar ambiguity exists in the Bundi painting of the same verse. The general iconography of the Bundi *Rasikapriyā* is closely related to the earlier Mewar sets, and a direct relationship between these sets is likely.⁹ Yet by representing Kṛṣṇa in a seated position with a woman, the Bundi set seems closer to the grammatical and literary intention of the poet by making it clearer that it is indeed Rādhā who is talking to Kṛṣṇa in the intimacy of their home. The other two women are placed nearer the camel, thereby suggesting that in all likelihood the *sankhīnī nāyikā* is one of the two women in the lower half of the picture.

It is particularly difficult to identify Rādhā with any degree of certainty in the Malwa sets, dating from ca. 1630 through the 1660s. Most of these folios have somewhat simpler compositions, with almost no hint of a specific context for the verse in visual terms. Only by reading the verses themselves can one even begin to decipher the suggested meaning of the picture. For example, the two folios from the first Malwa *Rasikapriyā* look remarkably similar (figs. 5 and 6). Both show a woman seated in a chamber being approached by Kṛṣṇa, who is accompanied by one or two attendants. It is only by reading the verses that we can identify the two images: one illustrating Rādhā’s “manifest mid-level pride or arrogance” (*rādhāko prakāśa madhyama māna*; IX, 17) and the other from the following chapter illustrating the occasion when Rādhā’s arrogance or pride is removed by momentary delusion of the mind (*rādhāko prasanga vidhvansa*; X, 24).

In the verse describing Rādhā’s pride (*rādhāko madhyama māna*), the *nāyikā*’s pride is moderately hurt when she sees Kṛṣṇa talking to another woman. When that woman comes to Rādhā to ask her to give up her pride, Rādhā vents her anger on her: “why have you come to talk to me and bore me just as you do with Kṛṣṇa?” The *nāyikā* also suggests that Kṛṣṇa should speak to her (Rādhā) directly and not through any third party. In the last line she mentions that Kṛṣṇa is shameless in the way he speaks about being with other women, but that does not mean that she, the idealized *nāyikā*, would do the same. Interestingly, the verse is supposed to be a comment by Rādhā to a single female figure; the painting does not attempt to illustrate the verse that



FIG. 5.

Rādhāko prakāśa madhyama māna (*Rādhā's manifest middle-level pride*), a page from an illustrated set of the *Rasikapriyā*, Malwa, Madhya Pradesh, India, before 1634. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

specifically. Rather, the artist has taken to heart the last line, which suggests that Rādhā would remain shy, not shameless, and that as suggested by the title of the verse, this image should be about Rādhā's pride. Thus, although not mentioned in the verse, the painter shows Kṛṣṇa with two other women, making clear Rādhā's pride and withdrawn state. Rādhā is distinguished by her placement in the pavilion, her gestures, and her slightly more elaborate dress. In other words, the painter of the Malwa set, rather than focusing on the entire verse, goes for the essence of the meaning and simply suggests it through Rādhā's demeanor. We have a sense of the



FIG. 6.

Rādhāko prasnaga vidhvansa (*Removal of Rādhā's pride by temporary delusion of the mind*), a page from an illustrated set of the *Rasikapriyā*, Malwa, Madhya Pradesh, India, before 1634. National Museum, New Delhi.

meaning of the verse but not a precise illustration of the verse.

In the next verse as well (X, 24), one needs to read the text carefully to attribute any meaning to the image (fig. 6). Here we see Rādhā in a similar gesture, suggesting her withdrawn, noncommunicative state. The verse exemplifies how a *nāyikā*'s pride is momentarily given up when she becomes preoccupied with fear. Here the other woman holding Kṛṣṇa's hand is actually a friendly attendant and not a rival. The verse makes it clear that the attendant tries to convince Rādhā that her reading of the circumstances as threatening is incorrect; in fact they are quite auspicious, and she

should meet Kṛṣṇa right away, even if she wanted to resume her silence the next day. The painter provides the gesture of speaking (*vitarka mudrā*) to the attendant and makes the intent of the verse clear. Yet it is only by reading the verse that we can appreciate more fully the very different intent of this painting from the previous image. The paintings by themselves do not provide the full complexity of the meaning embodied in the verses. Their depictions of Rādhā seem particularly limited.

This brief analysis suggests that the *Rasikapriyā* paintings do not make a fine distinction between images of Rādhā specifically as the wife of Kṛṣṇa and those in which she is portrayed as the archetypal heroine. It also suggests that in the *Rasikapriyā* paintings Rādhā is by and large discernible only when she is connected to Kṛṣṇa or portrayed as slightly different from other women.

This overview of verses and images also suggests a discrepancy between the complexity of Rādhā as described in the *Rasikapriyā* verses and the more generalized visual depictions. In the text, Keśavdās makes some effort to distinguish between the Rādhā who is the idealized, specific heroine, the daughter of Brisbhanu, and one of the wives of Kṛṣṇa and the Rādhā who exemplifies different types of generic heroines. In keeping with contemporary literary traditions, his goal is to shift the emphasis from the devotional notions of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to their usage in a more secularized, literary context. The painters, on the other hand, continue to use the conventions that come out of the devotional tradition.

Rādhā in the *Rasikapriyā* paintings, as in other related painted sets, is a generalized heroine in court settings and aristocratic clothing, to be distinguished from other women by such simple devices as extra clothing and jewelry and her placement in relation to the figure of Kṛṣṇa. Since the emphasis is not on the narrative of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā's life together, each image becomes a small visual vignette, to be understood fully only in the context of the verse.

It is fair to say that of almost all the texts that were illustrated from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries at the Rajput courts in Rajasthan and Punjab Hills, the *Rasikapriyā* was more verse-dependent than any other. It had neither the oral narrative recognition of the grand narratives of the *Rāmāyaṇa*

or the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* nor the visual simplicity of the iconic images of such texts as the *rāgamālā*.

As Keśavdās himself mentions in the text, he wrote it for the benefit of a *rasika*, a connoisseur, not for an average viewer or reader. To fully appreciate the nuances of the character of Rādhā, it would have been necessary for the viewer of the paintings then, and it is necessary for the student of the work today, to have a thorough knowledge of the text. □

Notes

This article takes its inspiration from *Krishnamandala: A Devotional Theme in Indian Art*, an exhibition catalogue by Walter M. Spink (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1971) and is based on my dissertation, "Connoisseur's Delights: Early *Rasikapriyā* Paintings in India," completed under the guidance of Professor Spink in 1984 at the University of Michigan.

1. For a detailed discussion of Rādhā in early modern literature, see Karin Schomer, "Where Have All the Rādhās Gone? New Images of Woman in Modern Hindi Poetry," in *The Divine Consort: Rādhā and the Goddesses of India*, ed. John S. Hawley and Donna M. Wulff (Berkeley Theological Union: Berkeley, 1982), 89-116.

2. All of the translations of the verses are based on the study of the *Rasikapriyā* by the late noted scholar Vishvanath Prasad Mishra, *Rasikapriyākā Priyāprasad Tilak* (Hindi), (Varanasi: Kalyandas and Brothers, 1964), augmented when necessary by the translations in K. P. Bahadur, *The Rasikapriyā of Keshavdās* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 1972). The numbers at the end of the verses refer to chapters and verses within each chapter as numbered by Mishra.

3. Schomer, "Where Have All the Rādhās Gone?," 94.

4. As is customary with most texts on the *nāyaka-nāyikā* classifications, Keśav uses two types of verses in the *Rasikapriyā*: definitional and exemplary. The definitional verses are generally short and define the type of hero or heroine or their moods, expressions, etc., whereas exemplary verses actually provide a situational example of the definition. For example, the definitional verse for *svādhināpatikā nāyikā* simply says that this is the heroine whose husband is completely under her control. The exemplary verse then provides a context in which we see Rādhā exhibiting that control.

5. Exemplary verses in the *Rasikapriyā* are further classified as

the manifest form or the hidden form, allowing each category to be seen from two different perspectives. The hidden form of a *nāyikā*, for example, suggests that others are not aware of the condition of the lover, whereas the manifest form is open and understood by all.

6. Keśav uses this device throughout the text. By using Rādhā's name in the title of the verses that describe the *nāyikā*'s condition and by doing the same with Kṛṣṇa, he suggests a loose affiliation between the *nāyaka-nāyikā* classification and the Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā romance. But there is only the context of their love and no reference to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* or Kṛṣṇa's other wives from the *Purāṇas*, such as Rukmījī. Also, the chapters that describe the conditions of love in terms of internal feelings (*bhāva*), external gestures and behavior (*lābha*) (chap. VI), or the mental states of the lovers when they are separated take up the condi-

tions of both the *nāyaka* and *nāyikā*, thereby balancing Kṛṣṇa's feelings for Rādhā and her feelings for him. Thus, they are both seen in human and somewhat equal terms, which allows Keśav to humanize Rādhā without sacrificing her projection as the ideal heroine in more descriptive verses.

7. For further discussion of the early illustrations of the *Rasikapriyā* at many of these courts, see Desai, "Connoisseur's Delights."

8. Mishra, *Rasikapriyākā Priyāprasad Tilak*, 73.

9. This becomes evident when one compares the illustrations from the first Mewar set, datable to ca. 1630, with the first known Bundi set, datable to ca. 1660.

Bikaneri Nazar Paintings

Depicting Kṛṣṇa

THE MAHĀRĀJAS AND MAHĀRĀNĪS of Bikaner were Vaiṣṇava, followers of Viṣṇu. Their devotion was so ardent that one Mahārāja, Karan Singh (r. 1631–69; 1674), even dreamed of the *Vaikuṇṭha* paradise (abode of Heaven, where Viṣṇu resides with his consort Lakṣmī) and had it imagined in a magnificent, well-known painting, *Vaikuṇṭha Darśan*, created by his favorite Muslim Ustad painter, Ali Raza. In order to please the Mahārājas, as well as follow the custom of the Bikaneri court, the artists created small portraits to present (*nazar*) to their patrons during festivals. The subjects of the presentation portraits included Kṛṣṇa, Mahā-Lakṣmī, Gaṇeśa, and other deities, Mahārājas and princes, and heroines (*nāyikās*) in various moods and settings. Kṛṣṇa images were the most favored portraits because the popular god appealed to both the Mahārājas and Mahārānīs. The former may have imagined themselves as heroes comparable to Kṛṣṇa, and the god's triumphs and amorous acts with the *gopis* may have been personally meaningful to the latter.

The Bikaneri *nazar* paintings (here focusing only on those works depicting Kṛṣṇa fluting) were created by most, if not all, of the senior artists working for the royal art studios of Bikaner. Unique in their proportions, nature, and subject matter, they are also distinct from most other Bikaneri paintings because they were created by the master artist working alone in order to impart his personal touch and sentinel expression to his patron. In contrast, when an atelier prepared larger, complex compositions to illustrate *rāgamālās* and texts such as the *Rasikapriyā*, *Bārahmāsā*, and *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, those paintings

were a joint effort of the master artist and his students. The solitary creation of *nazar* paintings has significantly aided in distinguishing individual artists' hands. Moreover, as most *nazar* paintings are inscribed on the obverse with the artist's name and date-month-year of the execution or submission, they are extremely useful in determining the annual development and tenure of the artists, as well as any drastic change in their style (as occurred during the periods of Jodhpur or Jaipur influence). But the artists apparently did not write the inscriptions themselves, for there is an overall uniformity in the calligraphy, and the handwriting can be matched with that in other inventory records. Finally, the inscriptions also divulge many other interesting aspects of life and work in the Bikaneri ateliers.

PROCESS OF PRESENTING NAZAR PAINTINGS

As any of the significant festivals approached (see below), the master artist would ritually paint a *nazar* portrait of Kṛṣṇa. The artist would bring his painting and stand at his allotted rank/position, which was superior to the other craftsmen and subjects of the realm because master painters received many special awards and benefits that were otherwise only conferred on high nobles of the court. When the artist's turn was announced, he would present his painting on top of a neatly folded, plain or embellished handkerchief-sized cloth carried on his right palm. With a ceremonial bow he would offer his work to the Mahārāja, on whose right stood the chief minister and court scribe. The Mahārāja would lift the painting from

the artist's palm and, in a gesture of appreciation, would offer the artist a token payment. The Mahārāja would briefly enjoy the painting; the minister would then take it from the Mahārāja and give it to the court scribe. In accordance with the ritual, the court scribe would either make a mental note or a note on a *bahi* (inventory register) of the occasion. Later the scribe would enter the appropriate name, date, occasion, etc. in the court records.

Since this practice occurred at least four times a year (presuming four main festivals), quite a number of *nazar* paintings were once preserved in Bikaner. A master artist, in a career spanning fifteen years, would have submitted enough *nazar* paintings to let us evaluate his personal stylistic evolution with some confidence. During this same period, according to the practice in Bikaner, the master artist and his atelier produced at least one *rāgamālā* set (thirty-six or forty-two paintings) and perhaps a *Bārahmāsā* series also. He further contributed to the ongoing *Rasikapriyā* and *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* group projects, composed *Darbar* and genre scenes, and painted several portraits of his Mahārāja, as well as regional governors and neighboring Mughal and Deccani rulers.

SIZE OF THE NAZAR PAINTINGS

Nazar paintings are similar in size to modern postcards. Their rectangular format is reminiscent of the standard size of strips prepared by the Bikaneri artists to paste on the sides of a painting as borders. They may also have been inspired by the form of western Indian palm-leaf and paper manuscript paintings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. *Nazar* paintings may also derive from *Ganjifa* (playing cards) or painted copies of metal shrine deities, such as the similar-sized paintings of Śrīnāthjī.

KRŚNA FLUTING

Kṛṣṇa fluting was the most popular theme for Bikaneri *nazar* paintings. Whether imagined as Muralidhar (flute bearer), Bānsidhar (flute bearer), or Veṇugopāl (the cowherd with the flute), the Kṛṣṇa of *nazar* paint-

ings is more adorable and approachable than the venerable but somber Kṛṣṇa portrayed in paintings such as the *Vaikunṭha Darśan*. Kṛṣṇa plays a long, slender flute made of gold or silver (gilded or silvered bamboo?), sometimes bejeweled and with one or two pompons dangling from it. Such flutes have a very shrill sound that travels a long distance. From the edge of the Vṛndāvan forest and the bank of the Yamunā River, Kṛṣṇa played this flute, perhaps enticing the women in town to come and dally with him in divine bliss. The prevalence in painting of Kṛṣṇa fluting was paralleled in contemporary literature, as most of the medieval *Bhakti* poems and songs from the sixteenth century onward contain references to Kṛṣṇa's melodious fluting.

NAZAR PORTRAITS OF KRŚNA

Nazar paintings typically feature modest portraits of Kṛṣṇa. Unlike other *Kṛṣṇalilā* paintings in which Kṛṣṇa is surrounded by a crowd of the faithful, in *nazar* paintings he is shown as a solitary figure. The Bikaner artists mainly depicted Kṛṣṇa as an adolescent god (sometimes even as feminine with one breast visible). He is portrayed with a thin, hourglass-shaped body, long eyelashes, and a conspicuous smile. Kṛṣṇa is typically shown wearing a combination of a red *dhoti* and a yellow scarf (*dupatta*) or visa versa. His yellow clothing reflects his popular iconography of being clad in yellow (*pitāmbar*), while his red clothing is perhaps derived from the Rajasthani tradition of red (*kasumbal*) as an auspicious color for gods, priests, and royalty to wear. The backgrounds of the *nazar* paintings generally consist of a minimal landscape, frequently embellished with tufts of grasses. At the top of the painting a curtainlike band of clouds hangs against a plain gray or blue sky. Sometimes in the foreground is a narrow band of wavy water indicating the Yamunā River, which is often thronged with blossoming lotus (in a manner derived from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century painting). In the majority of the river scenes Kṛṣṇa is seated on a full-blown lotus and is in an amorous mood.

Several postures of Kṛṣṇa in *nazar* painting are

noteworthy. Sometimes he stands in a pose reminiscent of that in Nathdwara paintings of Śrināthji, with his feet joined at both heels or standing cross-legged. In other images, Krśna's pose can be compared to that of a flying *kinnara*, with his right leg folded under him and his left extended behind him. Often Krśna is depicted dancing in ecstasy while lifting or playing his flute. At other times he sits in a regal attitude. In all, he is shown in a number of postures and situations:

1. Krśna standing or dancing (holding a flute)
 - 1a. dancing with a flute
 - 1ai. dancing against a landscape
 - 1b. near a riverbank
 - 1bi. with one or two cows
 - 1bii. against a tree
 - 1biii. with women
 - 1c. in a *jharoka* (palace window)
 - 1d. holding a flower vase
 - 1e. playing *holī* with *gopis*
 - 1f. embracing a *gopi*
2. Krśna seated
 - 1a. against a bolster in a regal posture
 - 1ai. on a couch or a chair
 - 1b. with a flute on a lotus
 - 1c. at the riverbank, sometimes with *gopis* or cows listening (fig. 1)
3. Krśna playing *holī*
 - 3a. with Rādhā
 - 3b. with *gopis*
 - 3c. throwing colored water while standing alone

(For more attractive compositions of *nazar* paintings, sometimes a combination of posture groups 1–3 and their subgroups is used. Even so, the compositions remain elementary compared to more elaborate Bikaneri paintings.)

The above postures and compositions were probably derived from those featured in the elaborate *Kṛṣṇalilā* scenes already in vogue in Bikaner. Because of this dependent relationship, each Krśna posture in *nazar* painting may also be interpreted as alluding to its source image type. Accordingly, there are several popular Krśna themes, proposed here for the first time, that may have formed the visual basis of the *nazar* painting compositions:

1. <i>Kāliyamardana</i>	for group 1
2. Krśna with <i>gopis</i>	for group 2
3. <i>Cirharana</i>	for group 3
4. Krśna playing <i>holī</i> with Rādhā and <i>gopis</i>	for group 3

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS INVOLVING NAZAR PAINTING

All the above types of Krśna *nazar* paintings were presented at various religious festivals and important social occasions, notably:

1. *Navarātri* (September)
2. *Cet/Caitra* (March)
3. *Jetha* or *Jyaiṣṭha* (May–June)
4. *Dasaharā* (September)
5. *Mahāvad* or *Māgh Sudi* (February)
6. *Holi* (February–March)
7. *Divālī* (October)
8. Mahārāja's birthday (artists mainly presented the Mahārāja's portrait; in some cases, portraits of Krśna or other deities)
9. *Mātamposi*, or “mourning” of the death of the ruling Mahārāja (a custom peculiar to Bikaner and perhaps some other Rajasthani courts)

LISTS OF NAZAR PAINTINGS

An inventory register (*bahi*) dated 1695 clearly reveals that, apart from loose paintings on Vaiṣṇava themes (such as *Gajendramokṣa*), several lists of Vaiṣṇava manuscripts were prepared for Mahārānis or were preserved in their possession. The 1695 *bahi* records many of the earliest *nazar* paintings of Bikaner:

1. no. 2. “Flute-playing Krśna and 15 Ladies” by Ruknuddin, dated VS 1731/1674
2. no. 29. “Assembly of Krśna, Rādhā and 5 Ladies” by Gullu, VS 1748/1691, *Jeth, Vadī* 4
3. no. 30. “Assembly of Krśna and 3 Ladies” by Nathu, VS 1749/1692
4. no. 40. “Assembly of Krśna and 5 Others” by Nure, son of Isa, VS 1752/1695, *Poh, Vad* 2
5. recto 9. “Works of Ruknuddin in 1 sheaf have



13

come from *des* (homeland of Rajasthan) and amended (by him) on *sudi* 13, *Jeṭha*, VS 1754/1697" (an inventory date of the collection, possibly indicating that the paintings were done earlier). Of the three paintings it contains, two are on Kṛṣṇa themes:

- (1) "Kṛṣṇa playing *rās* with 10 *gopis* in a bower"
- (2) "Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā (?) in the rain with 4 peacocks and two cows." About this painting it is recorded that "later it was presented ('nazar') VS 1754/1697, *Āśāḍha*, *Vadi* 10, cancelled 57."

In another inventory, *Sambhālā Bahī*, are four groups of *nazar* entries:¹

Vadi 13, *Āśāḍha*, VS 1753

Akhateej, VS 1754 (Kṛṣṇa playing on a flute)

Dasaharā, VS 1754

Divālī, VS 1754

It is apparent from the inventories that certain artists regularly created *nazar* paintings for almost all occasions. Two examples of such artists, along with their works and the occasions for them, are listed below:

A. Isa of Ahmad Gajdhar, VS 1831–67:

1. Standing Kṛṣṇa doing *Dānalilā*, 1853, *Caitra*, *Vadi* 2
2. Kṛṣṇa on lotus, *Dasaharā*, 1831, *Āśoj*, *Vadi?* 11
3. Kṛṣṇa, lotus, cows, *Dasaharā*, 1858, *Āśoj*, *Vadi* 10
4. Standing Kṛṣṇa with 2 cows, *Holi*, 1833, *Caitra*, *Vadi* 1
5. Kṛṣṇa, plant, river bank, *Holi*, 1833, *Caitra*, *Vadi* 1
6. Seated Kṛṣṇa on throne, 1860, *Kārttika*, *Sudi* 1
7. Fluting Kṛṣṇa, 1857, *Kārttika*, *Vadi*
8. Fluting Kṛṣṇa, lotus, cows, 1852, *Aśvadi*, *Vadi*

FIG. 1.

Mahamad (active ca. 1700–1750), *Nazar* Painting of Kṛṣṇa, India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, opaque watercolor and ink on paper $5\frac{1}{8} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in. (13 × 9.5 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Paul F. Walter, M.79.191.9.

9. Kṛṣṇa, tree, lotus, architecture, *Divālī*
10. Standing Kṛṣṇa under a *kadamba* tree, *Divālī*, 1858

11. Portrait of Mahārāja Gaj Singh, 1853, *Mṛgaśīrsa*, *Vadi* 7 *Mātamposī*

B. Sababdin/Savdin/Sahu Usta of Muhammad/Mahamad, VS 1808–1912:

1. Standing lady in *jharoka*, *Divālī*, 1 . . .
2. Seated Lakṣmī with two elephants doing her *abhisekha*, *Divālī*, 1859
3. Portrait of Mahārāja Gaj Singh, *Dasaharā*, 1826, *Aśoj*, *Vadi* 10
4. Fluting Kṛṣṇa on lotus, *Dasaharā*, 1836
5. Fluting Kṛṣṇa in *jharoka*, *Holi*, 1835

CONCLUSION

The Bikaneri inventory lists are crucial evidence for documenting the myriad paintings produced for the court. Unique in the meager corpus of historical information relevant to Rajasthani painting, the inventories provide a definite *terminus ante quem* for the listed paintings and also specify the range and relative prevalence of the pictorial subjects. The inventories clearly indicate that *nazar* paintings were an important genre of Bikaneri imagery and that Kṛṣṇa was the preeminent focus of this most favored genre. □

Notes

Acknowledgments to Rajasthan Art Emporium, Jodhpur; Franco-Indian Pharmaceuticals Ltd., Mumbai; Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner; families of Khajanchis, Abdul Shapur Usta, and Kishan Sharma of Bikaner.

1. Naval Krishna, "Paintings and Painters in Bikaner: Notes on an Inventory Register of the 17th Century," in *Indian Painting: Essay in Honour of Karl J. Khandalavala*, ed. B. N. Goswamy, in association with Usha Bhatia (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1995), 254–80.

See Kṛṣṇa Run: Narrative Painting for Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar

IN RECENT YEARS a number of manuscripts and stray folios from manuscripts dating from the reign of Mummaḍi (the third) Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar have come to light. It is the intent of this article to offer a brief survey of the painting of this period and to present some thoughts on narrative details in the most ambitious known work of Kṛṣṇarāja's reign, a *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* manuscript that offers many sophisticated compositions.¹ Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja lived from 1794 to 1868. He was placed on the throne of Mysore after the death of Tipu Sultan in 1799, assumed rule in 1811, and was relieved of political power by the British in 1831. Since he was unemployed, as it were, he spent a great deal of energy revitalizing the arts of Mysore. He was an accomplished author in both Sanskrit and Kannada and an important inventor of games. He was an avid patron, interested in music, literature, painting, and architecture. A devoutly religious man, he wrote many religious texts, including his encyclopedic compilation entitled *Śrītattvanidhi*. This monumental work is known in two illustrated copies, one in the Oriental Research Institute in Mysore and one in the Sarasvati Bhandar Library in the Mysore royal palace. Recently I have discovered that one volume from the royal copy, bearing the Mahārāja's embossed library stamp, is in the McCune Family Trust collection.² This manuscript, originally from the palace library, is executed on more expensive watermarked European paper (some pages are dated 1817) and is much more finely detailed than the fairly well-known Oriental Research Institute copy. The volume is unfinished but has 624 illustrations on 254 sides of its 143 folios.³

The most impressive manuscript associated with Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja is an unfinished, but again pro-

fusely illustrated, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* manuscript now in the San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA 1990: 1402).⁴ It was intended to be the second half of the tenth book of that long work. Although unfinished, the text is written through folio 210, while the roughly 217 paintings continue through folio 152. As in the case of the one full volume of the *Śrītattvanidhi* that I have been able to study, the paintings abruptly stop; that is to say, there are no drawings or markedly unfinished paintings in any of the many spaces that were left in the rest of the manuscript. Again ribbed imported paper is used, and the flyleaf bears the Mahārāja's library seal. This *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* displays striking differences from the *Śrītattvanidhi*. Besides the expected differences between a narrative work and one that is serving an encyclopedic, often iconographic, function, the use of the plain paper backgrounds throughout the *Śrītattvanidhi* gives it a much drier, static appearance. The palette is not as varied, and the pigment is not applied as thickly.

Many other known works associated with the king's reign are executed in the style epitomized by the many paintings in the *Śrītattvanidhi*. A separate manuscript from this period of part of the music section of the *Śrītattvanidhi*, in a similar style and entitled *Svaracūḍāmaṇi*, has been published.⁵ It is only marginally more expansive than the main work itself. Although a fire in 1897 during the wedding of a Mysore princess destroyed much of the royal library, a number of manuscripts have survived. A few folios from early nineteenth-century manuscripts have been published.⁶ Most use the plain paper backgrounds of the *Śrītattvanidhi*, and some use European paper. A large number of elegantly illustrated playing



FIG. 1.
Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar, hand-colored lithograph,
Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore, no. 370,
frontispiece, before 1855.

cards also survive from the period, often using the elaborate iconography contained in Kṛṣṇarāja's *Śrītattvanidhi*. Other books connected to the king's authorship and patronage include a number of small works printed on a lithographic press established in the palace. A great majority must represent portions of *Śrītattvanidhi*; much of the iconography is identical. In the cases where the prints are hand-colored, the color is identical to similar figures in Kṛṣṇarāja's great work. Figure 1 illustrates a hand-colored frontispiece to one of these small lithographed books, a portrait of the king himself.⁷ A few of the books from the king's press are of a more narrative nature, which could be compared with some of the compositions

in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, but I have far too little data on these books to discuss them here.

Various wall paintings from Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja's reign still exist. These include those in the Jagannātha Palace in Mysore,⁸ Tipu Sultan's palace in the Daryā Daulat Bāgh at Srirangapatna,⁹ and in various temples around the palace.¹⁰ Impressive murals are still extant at Sravana Belgola¹¹ and were still to be seen in Mudabidri some twenty years ago.¹² An important painted shrine on the roof of Prasanna Veṅkaṭaramaṇasvāmi temple in Mysore was built before 1836 by the saint Subbarāyādāsa, who was a close friend of the Mahārāja. On another occasion I have demonstrated that the king's obsessive collecting nature and similar obsessive pilgrimages made by this saint were probably the reason for their close friendship.¹³ Clearly court artists assisted in the decoration of the saint's shrine, and portraits of twelve of the Wodeyar Mahārājas are incorporated into the decorative scheme. The rest of the walls depict pilgrimage spots and a few iconographic images. Two of the ceilings represent the holy places of north India, with many important pilgrimage spots depicted in small narrative scenes.¹⁴

The placement of much of this material into the nineteenth century is relatively new, and many loose paintings that have been thought of as quite early are now being redated to Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja's reign. For instance, when the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* volume was sold, it was dated earlier, but an analysis of the architecture that reflects buildings built by the British in the area suggested a later dating.¹⁵ Portraiture figured prominently during the reign of Kṛṣṇarāja, and scores of contemporary portraits of the king and other notables are found in many collections.¹⁶ There are two portraits of the king himself in the manuscript. The first (folio 3v)¹⁷ has him witnessing Kṛṣṇa leaving a city, and the second (folio 97v) has him taking part in the drama.

Through internal evidence a dispersed *Devi-mahātmya* with folios in various collections, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum,¹⁸ can likewise be placed in his reign. The text on the verso of a folio now in the Berkeley Art Museum and formally part of the Jean and Francis Marshall Collection informs us that the work is a Kannada translation by Kṛṣṇarāja of the

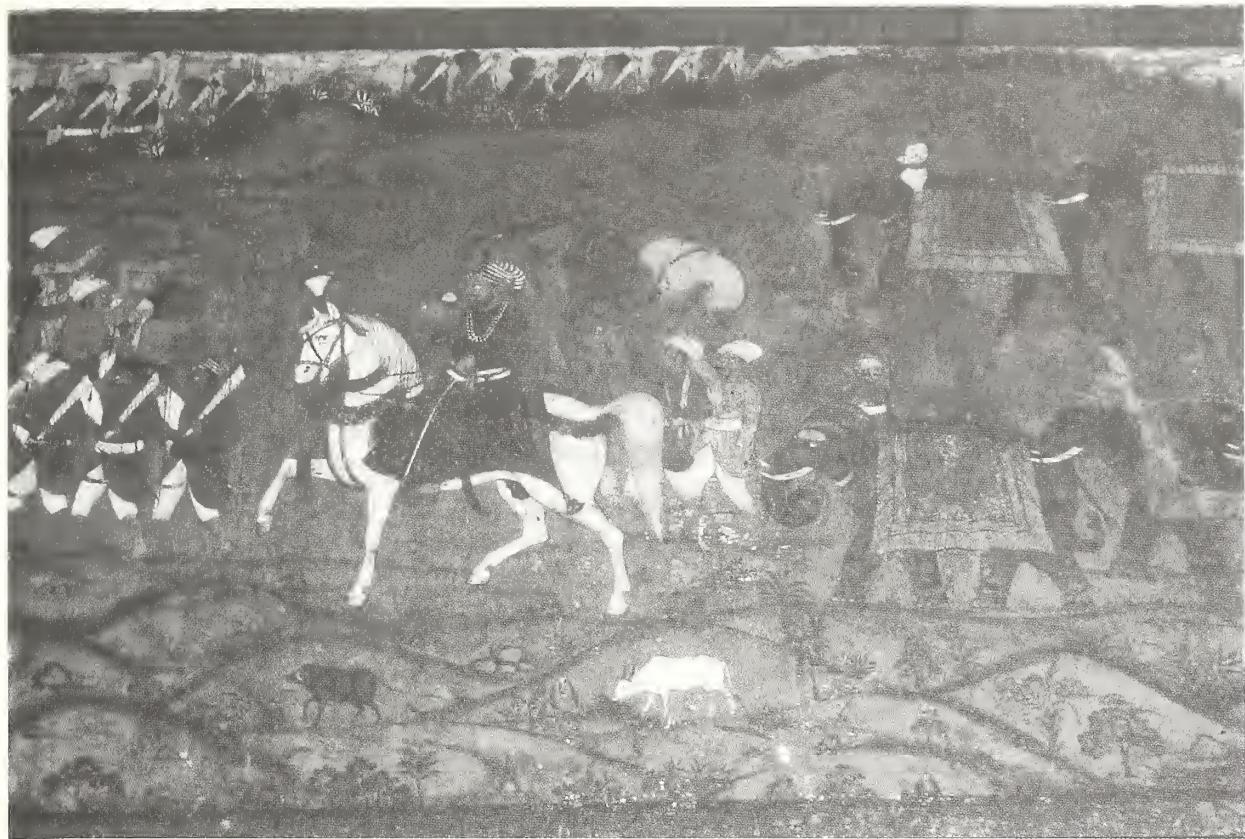


FIG. 2.
Battle of Palilur (detail), Tipu Sultan's palace in the Daryā Daulat Bāgh, Srirangapatna, ca. 1830.

Sanskrit *Devīmahātmya*. Consequently these folios also must date from the king's maturity. The style and execution are very similar to the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, but the few folios that I have seen are not as varied and accomplished as many in the San Diego manuscript.

The great glory of Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja's reign is this *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* manuscript. The pages are treated with a wide variety of formats, and the paintings are ingeniously related to the text. In my earlier article I considered some of the formal treatments of the pages, merely hinting at the many different approaches to narrative. The placement of the paintings within the written text allows us to consider in a straightforward manner the many choices open to the king's artists. Many paintings offer simple iconic images, but the great majority contain memorable narrative elements. The story is told both in words and in pictures.¹⁹ Rather than merely classify different kinds of narrative, I want to demonstrate that even a

single type of narrative can be used in more or less ambitious ways and that the artists' choices may be linked intrinsically with the text itself. There can be striking variety in compositions that can be labeled as "continuous narrative," for instance. The artists of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* display a far greater sense of the dramatic and more ingenuity in many of their compositions than seen in any other work from our period.

A few comparisons can illustrate this point. The large battle scenes at the Daryā Daulat palace at Srirangapatna (repainted during the reign of Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja) were made to glorify Tipu Sultan and the power of the British Raj that defeated him; consequently, they are rather static and formal in their organization (fig. 2). A double-page composition from the second part of the *Devīmahātmya* (depicting Devī as Kauśikā assisted by Kālī and the *saptamatrkās* fighting the demon Raktabija) now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

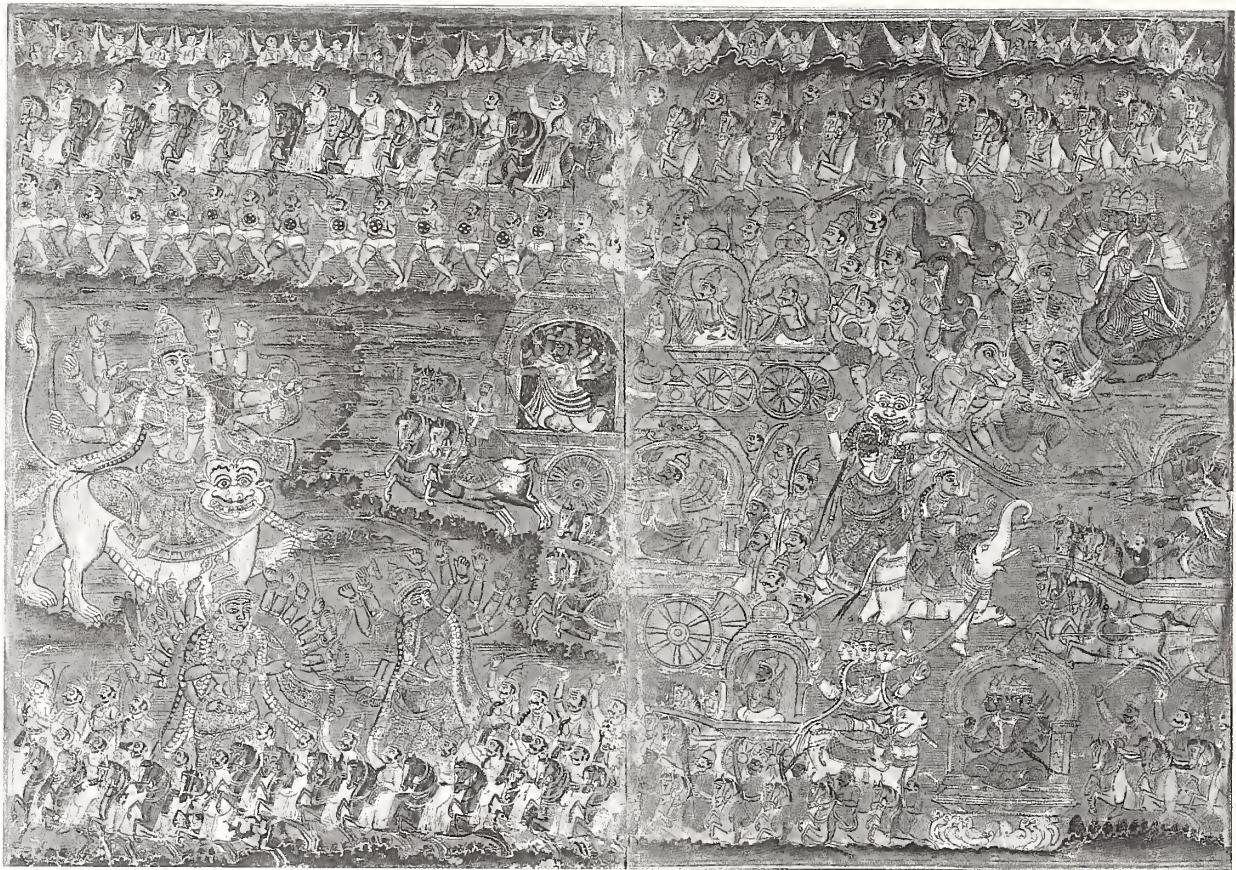


FIG. 3.

Kauśikā fights Raktabija, from a Devimahātmya manuscript, folios 51v and 52r, ca. 1825–50, ink, color, and gold on paper. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by Dorothy and Richard Sherwood, M.88.29.1.

(fig. 3) is organized similarly with formal rows of soldiers; but a double page from the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (fig. 4) is quite different.²⁰ The narrative nature of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* offers more chances for clever and complex compositions than do an official mural and the essentially iconic and religious character of the *Devimahātmya*. Contributing to the iconic and salutary qualities of the wall-painting and the *Devimahātmya* folios is the use of a very pronounced hieratic scale. This is evident in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* double-page composition as well but not used in quite the same way or to the same extent. For the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* scene the figures are not nearly as large in comparison to others, and the principal figures are all the same size.

Besides offering a more interesting visual image, this double page illustrates a sophisticated use of con-

tinuous narration. The scene depicts Kṛṣṇa's attack on the city of Prāgyotiṣapura and the fight with the demon Naraka described in chapter 59 (*Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X.l ix.2–31). Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā, sitting upon Garuḍa, are shown six times. These six images are arranged formally, encircling the entire composition. Reading is not just left to right or right to left or clockwise. However illogical from a Western point of view, the formalization of the scene with the spreading out of the repeated figures of Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā on Garuḍa makes for a sophisticated composition, with symmetrical events framing the main and most important action of the story.²¹ At the same time, the artist does not just confine himself to the elements of the story; he inserts many small details into the composition, including boats in the river flying the Union Jack. Other illustrations in the



FIG. 4.
Kṛṣṇa fights Naraka, Bhāgavata Purāṇa manuscript, folios 52v–53r, ink, color, and gold on paper. San Diego Museum of Art, 1990:1402.

manuscript often include small genre elements and added detail. The artists are creating interesting paintings, not just illustrating the text verbatim.²² At the same time checking textual details against the paintings suggests that the paintings are remarkably literal in detail; hence the use of the loaded word *illustration* would be appropriate in many cases.

I read the scenes here as they are presented in the text: Kṛṣṇa first fights Mura and then Mura's sons at the top and bottom of the right folio. These two fights frame the important confrontation between Kṛṣṇa and Naraka, which dominates the middle plane of this double-page composition. Naraka is shown emerging from the city on the right and crossing into the left folio. Kṛṣṇa fights his hosts at the top and bottom and then defeats the demon in the center. The thrust of this part of the story is right to left, but the aftermath of the story is shown at the extreme right, when Kṛṣṇa is received by Naraka's mother within the city's walls.

It may seem illogical not to read these scenes in a straight line, but one must consider the nature of Indian literary narrative. Many of its tales are known, found in the epics and also in the later *Purāṇas*. The same story may be told a number of times in a particular work as well as appearing in various other texts. Much of Indian literature concerns these retellings. The narrator is often present in these texts, so readers are constantly aware that this is a story that they already know.²³ Events are often suggested by the statement of the outcome—the end of the story, not the beginning. At this point in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, King Parīkṣit asks the sage, Śuka, about a specific event. Chapter 58 ends with Kṛṣṇa's defeat of Naraka (called Bhaumāsura in the text) and the release of the captive princesses. Chapter 59 begins with the king's question: how did it happen? In fact, the outcome is depicted on folio 50v before chapter 59 begins. The first illustration of the new chapter on folio 51v is a large

FIG. 5.
Kṛṣṇa scenes,
Prasanna Kṛṣṇasvāmi
temple, Mysore Palace,
1825–29.

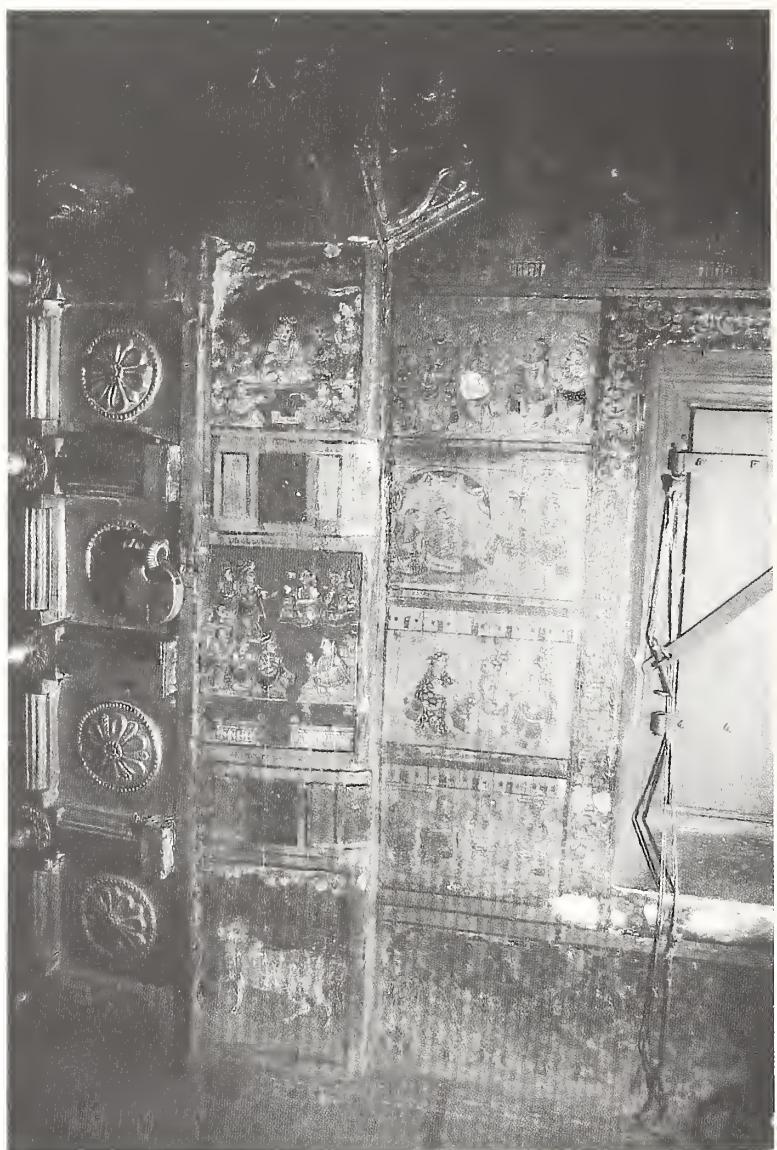


FIG. 6.
Yaśodhā and Kṛṣṇa and the child Kṛṣṇa
euthroned, Śrītattvanidhi, folio 116r
(detail), ca. 1825–50, ink, color, and
gold on paper. McCune Family Trust.





FIG. 7.

Scenes from Nāgakumāracarita, Jaina matha, Sravana Belgola, ca. 1825–50.

but simple depiction of Krṣṇa and Satyabhāmā mounted on Garuḍa leaving Dvaraka. The tale unfolds in the following paintings.²⁴ Rather than tell the tale in a simple, straightforward manner with small episodes in sequence (perhaps using separate registers), the artist of this elaborate double-page illustration has organized an impressive composition, with balanced events framing the crucial confrontation.

Krṣṇa stories are illustrated elsewhere during Mummaḍi Krṣṇarāja's reign, most importantly in the Prasanna Krṣṇasvāmi temple at the Mysore Palace (completed in 1829), where the paintings are more standardized because of the nature of the wall surfaces (fig. 5). There is no large, expansive area to lay out complex compositions. The paintings are placed over doorways and in small sections of painted column forms. The scenes depicted here are from stories in the earlier half of book ten of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, mostly the events of Krṣṇa's childhood. They appear more iconic than the usual illustration in our manu-

script since they depict far fewer characters. Similar compositions are found throughout the *Śrītattvanidhi* (fig. 6). The compositions may appear deceptively simple, but narrative elements allow us to interpret the stories that we already know. Here, as in so much of Indian art, an iconic or devotional figure can serve two purposes: that of icon to be worshipped and that of referent to a story. Consequently, many of these figures are iconic and narrative at the same time.

Various uses of continuous narration are found in our manuscript and in many other paintings from this period, best typified by the murals from Sravana Belgola (fig. 7).²⁵ On the whole the Sravana Belgola murals present more straightforward narrative than seen in our manuscript. Other folios of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* are as simple as the many scenes at Sravana Belgola, repeating a figure two or three times or separating specific events into distinct compositions. For Krṣṇa's fight with Rukmī (*Bhāgavata-purāṇa* X.liv.19–49) (folios 24v–25r)²⁶ the specific events are divided

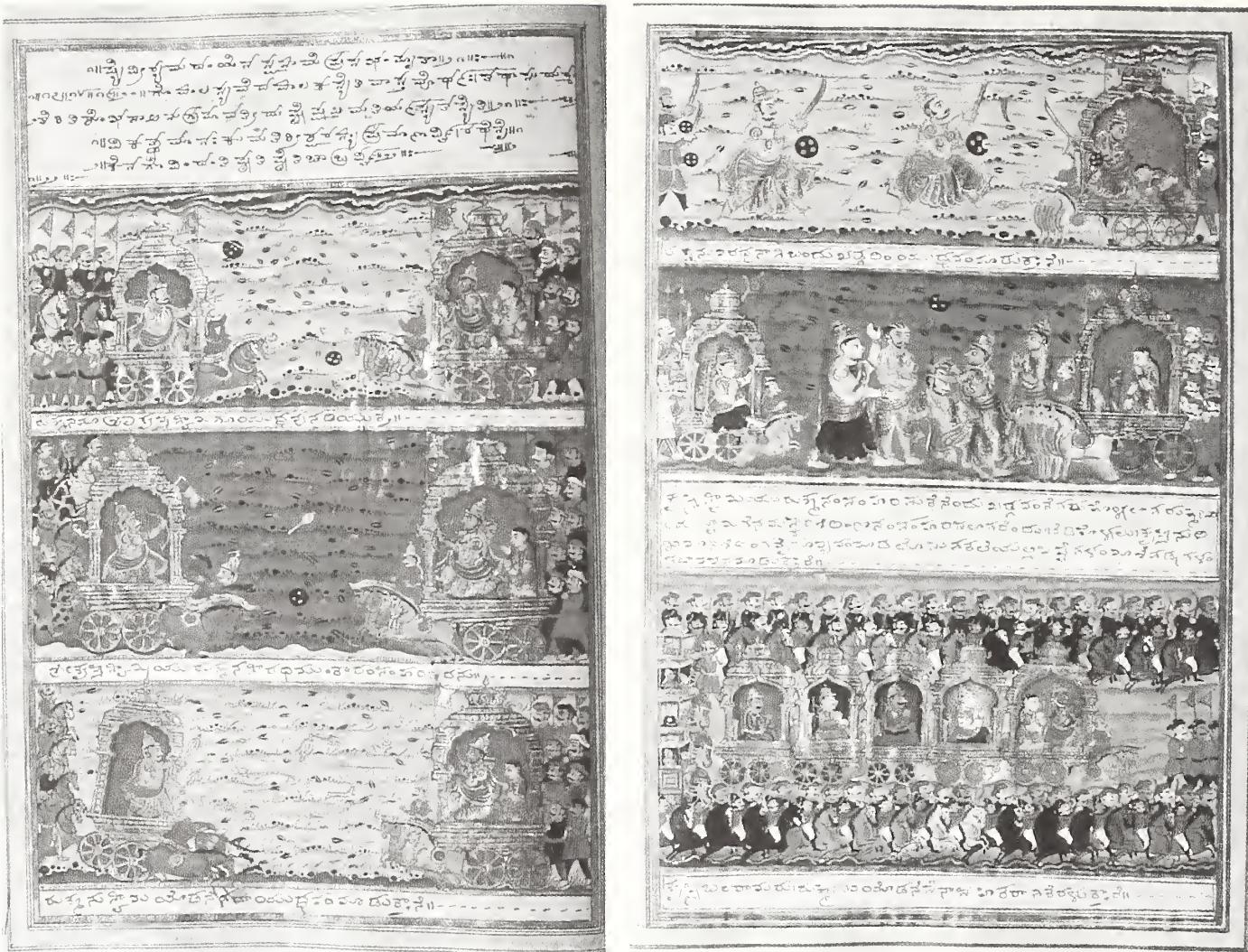


FIG. 8.

Kṛṣṇa fights Rukmī, Bhāgavatapurāṇa manuscript, folios 24v–25r, ink, color, and gold on paper.
San Diego Museum of Art, 1990:1402.

into separate registers on two facing pages (fig. 8). In this case the division of the story into three registers per page does not suggest that the artist is incapable of showing the multiple scenes of the fight in one composition but rather highlights the scenes by drawing out the story. The most important event is depicted in the middle register on the right, which uses continuous narration to illustrate Rukmīñi's pleading for the life of her brother Rukmī and Rukmī's disfigurement. This type of registration is very pronounced at Sravana Belgola, where the scenes are divided into a wide variety of sizes but on the whole retain a rectangular horizontal shape. The Sravana Belgola ex-

amples are often identical in treatment to the many horizontal friezelike compositions found in the Bhāgavatapurāṇa manuscript.²⁷

Perhaps the double-page composition of the attack on Naraka can be viewed as a wall in miniature, thus compatible with a more elaborate and complex treatment, but this does not explain why the Kṛṣṇa-Rukmī fight, which also covers two pages, is divided into registers. When the book was laid out and the text written, two pages were left virtually blank for illustration in both cases. The text of the Kṛṣṇa-Rukmī confrontation describes contests with various weapons. Very few characters are involved: Kṛṣṇa,

Rukmī, their charioteers, and Rukmīnī, with their respective retinues framing the scenes.²⁸ Logically the events all happened in one spot, with the two chariots facing each other. The text has none of the active drama of Kṛṣṇa's fights with many different adversaries, as in the Naraka episode. It could have been a boring, and possibly confusing, composition if attempted as continuous narration.

At the same time the rhythm of the story, how the text slows down or speeds up the narrative, may be another factor in the choices open to the artist. This becomes clearer when we consider other illustrations in the manuscript, particularly what are seemingly less impressive and ambitious scenes. Most do not take up entire pages but are placed at top, bottom, or center of a page containing text. Many pages have two or three distinct framed compositions, which may or may not have text in between (the Rukmī episode discussed above had labels for each register but only a little text at the very top of the left-hand folio).

One deceptively simple-looking composition illustrates a much less important scene than the Naraka episode or the scenes surrounding the abduction of Rukmīnī. Folio 39v represents the end of the story of Satrājīt and the Syamantaka gem (fig. 9). The full story is quite long, comprising chapters 56 and 57. If we skip the beginning of the story, the immediate background to this one painting is that Śatadhanvā has killed Satrājīt, stolen the jewel, given it to a friend for safekeeping, and is fleeing Kṛṣṇa. Each of these scenes was depicted in separate narrative compositions. In all, sixteen painted spaces are divided into eighteen framed scenes leading up to this one painting and another two after it, for a total of twenty-one scenes in all.

Organized in three planes, many specific events are illustrated in this one painting, and most of these rest solidly on the ground line. Chasing Śatadhanvā, whose horse collapses, Kṛṣṇa leaves his chariot when Śatadhanvā goes on foot, kills the culprit with his discus, searches the dead body for the jewel, and returns to his chariot. We see him returning to Dvaraka in the middle plane and also see Balarāma, who was sitting in the chariot, entering the city of Mithila. For this narration one of Kṛṣṇa's representations is merely implied. We know that he was in the chariot when

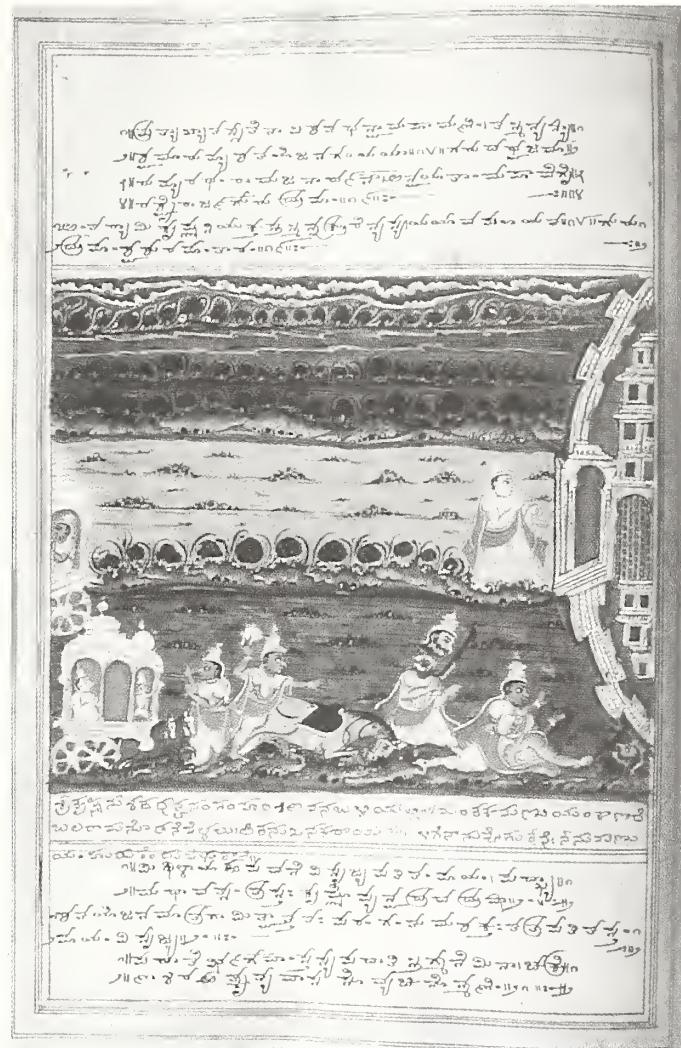


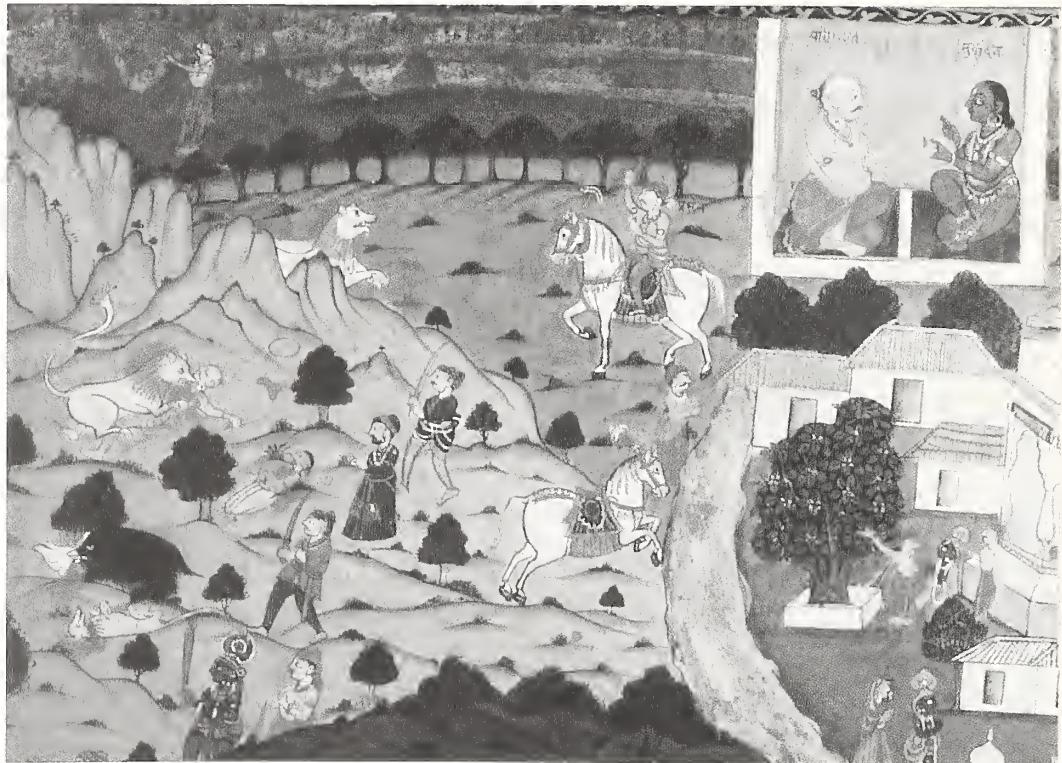
FIG. 9.

Kṛṣṇa kills Śatadhanvā, Bhāgavata Purāṇa manuscript, folio 39v, ink and color on paper. San Diego Museum of Art, 1990:1402.

he came upon the dead horse, but the forward section of the chariot is empty. On folio 39r, which precedes this one, the illustration at the bottom of the page depicts the two brothers in the chariot chasing Śatadhanvā, who is on his horse. The presence of the chariot with Balarāma represents the first event depicted here: Kṛṣṇa in the chariot before he gets out to chase the culprit on foot.

This condensation of the action is not just an artistic conceit on the part of the painter. Where the text of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is often quite expansive, at other times it is very concise, including much action in very few verses. All this action is contained

FIG. 10.
Story of the Syamantaka gem (detail),
from a Bhāgavatapurāṇa series,
Madhya Pradesh,
Datia, ca.
1790–1800,
ink, color,
and gold on paper.
Berkeley Art Museum, gift of Jean and Francis Marshall.



in a mere four verses of text, the first two of which appear at the bottom of this folio (*Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X.lvii.20–24). The double-page Naraka scene illustrated some thirty verses of text (*Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X.lx.2–31). The tempo or rhythm of the text is paralleled by the illustrations. Here the artist actually uses very little of the available space (the bottom third) to tell his story, but he packs in seven events. Much of the story surrounding the Syamantaka gem describes short episodes like this one.

Why did the artist not illustrate a larger number of verses and make an elaborate, complex composition, as in the Naraka scene—more text bunched together and then a double-page illustration? The answer is that this was not an option. When the text for these two chapters was written, twenty small spaces were left blank. Only a few of the pages were laid out exactly the same. Most received distinctive treatment, with larger or smaller spaces left for illustration. As is true of the text, these illustrations are packed with incident and concern an ever-changing cast of characters; hence the large number of small registers left by the copyist when the text was laid out. This manuscript was well thought out in advance. In this case a narrative scene like the Naraka episode simply would

not have worked as well. There are too many characters in this story. Kṛṣṇa appears and reappears a few times, but besides his fight with Jāmbavān early on in the story, his only other active moment is in this scene. Satrajit's story rambles on with many subplots and shifts of emphasis. It is not a straightforward tale like the Naraka episode, which happens not only over a short period of time but also in the same place, with the same characters, Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā on Garuḍa, involved in a number of combats. Had the artists who laid out this manuscript attempted a large epiclike composition, the retelling of the story of Kṛṣṇa's killing of Śatadhanvā could have lost its impact and become quite confusing.²⁹

Our manuscript actually can be considered an “illustrated” book. The more common approach to texts like the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is quite different, as demonstrated by a comparison of our one scene to a broader telling of the first half of the story of the Syamantaka gem painted at Datia around 1790 to 1800. This well-known series has pages of text affixed to the back of the paintings (fig. 10).³⁰ One page gives the entire text of chapter 56 except the first verse. This approach probably relates more to an oral tradition. In fact King Parīkṣit, who asks the questions,

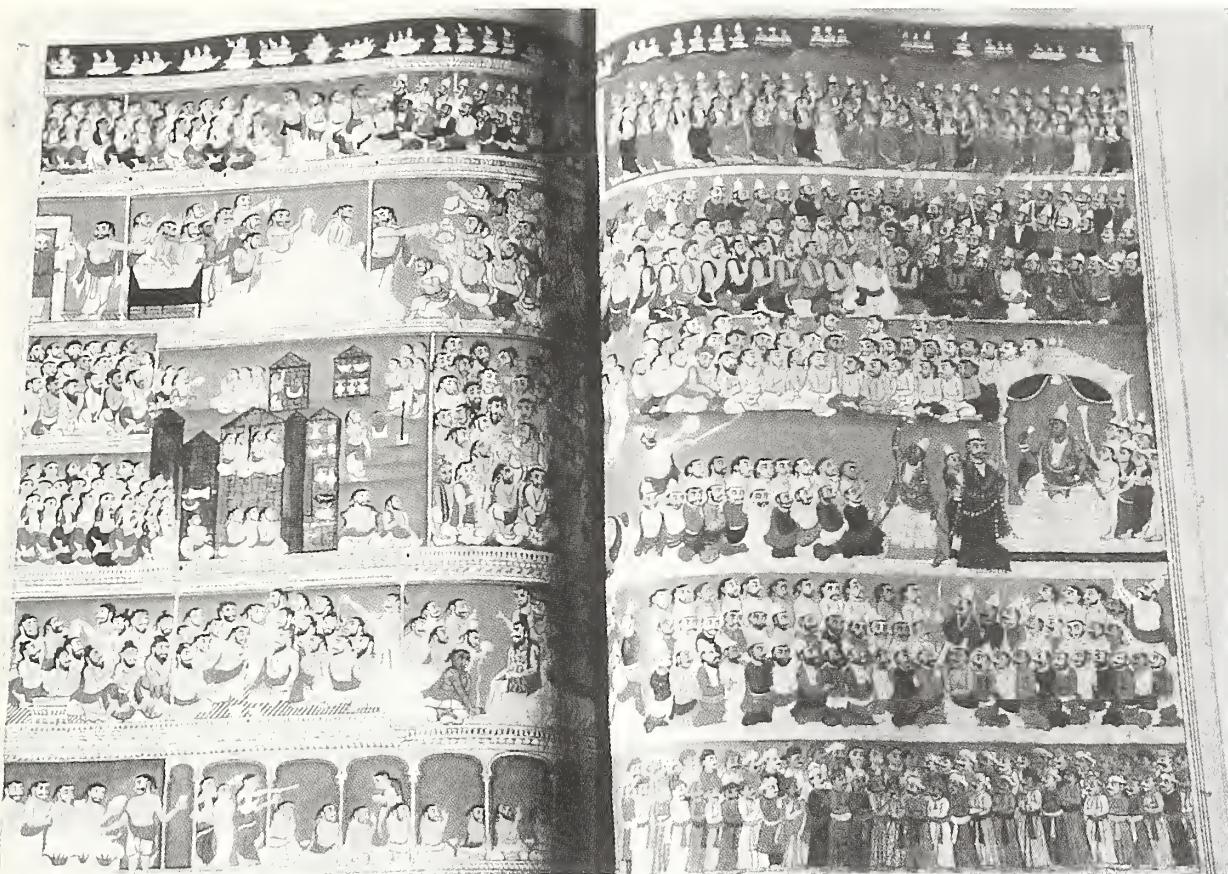


FIG. 11.

Yudhiṣṭhīra's Rājasūya sacrifice, Bhāgavatapurāṇa manuscript, folios 129v–130r, ink and color on paper. San Diego Museum of Art, 1990:1402.

and the sage Śuka, who relates the story, are shown in a register at the top of the painting. In the detail illustrated, Satrājīt receives the gem from the Sun at the top left and goes to Dvaraka. His brother Prasena rides out wearing the gem and is killed by a lion, which is killed in turn by the bear Jāmbavān. Satrājīt suggests Kṛṣṇa is responsible for the theft, so Kṛṣṇa takes Satrājīt to the scene of his brother's death. They find first Prasena and then the lion dead. They then proceed to Jāmbavān's cave at the lower left.

Here two sequences of the story are illustrated in the same space, both Prasena's and the lion's deaths and the finding of the bodies. Much of Indian illustration is more akin to the Datia page—full-page (loose-leaf) paintings, with or without text and labels added. The Datia pages are remarkable for illustrating complete chapters on single pages. Rather than illustrating the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* in a series of paintings, the

Mysore manuscript is a true book. The scenes corresponding to the Datia episodes are depicted in nine distinct compositions on six sides, and the text starts on folio 32v and ends on folio 37v. One is to read, not hear, the text so the scenes are handled in keeping with that reading. This truly is book illustration.

This illustration can be at times straightforward or subtle, since the text often sets up different moods or sets of actions at the same time. For instance, a double-page composition depicting Yudhiṣṭhīra's sacrifice, described in chapter 74 (folios 129v–103r), is arranged as a series of horizontal friezes of varying sizes in order to isolate fully the specific sacrificial incidents (fig. 11). The unfinished band at the top was for depicting the gods in their *vāhanas* attending the sacrifice. The largest framed space, just above center on the right-hand folio, contains a mini-narrative within the larger scene. As Yudhiṣṭhīra worships

Kṛṣṇa, Śiśupāla becomes enraged. Verses 42–43 state that Śiśupāla takes up his sword and shield; Kṛṣṇa rises and lops off Śiśupāla's head with his discus. In the illustration here the fallen body of Śiśupāla is partially hidden by the fold of the paper where these two pages meet. What we have here is a large narrative divided into smaller units for clarity and a small section of continuous narration embedded into the painting. You almost have to search for it after reading the text. Needless to say, Yudhiṣṭhīra's sacrifice is an extremely important event, especially in a book executed for a reigning monarch. But the episode of Kṛṣṇa's killing of Śiśupāla does not get the prominence we might have expected, since this chapter actually bears the title of this event.³¹

Still other folios can suggest both movement and the passage of time without repeating the figure of one of the actors. In a scene depicting Kṛṣṇa's release of the prisoners of Jarāsandha, they actually descend a staircase through the margins to a pavilion to meet with the four-armed god.³² While the text is written and read from left to right, they descend from right to left. The text actually describes the princely prisoners first and then the four-armed Kṛṣṇa. Again a Western bias may creep into our perception, but why does the illustration have to read the same way we read text?³³ We do not have to speculate that the painter was illiterate. Rather, the point is that literary direction simply does not matter. What matters here is that the former prisoners more logically descend from their mountain prison to meet with Kṛṣṇa, and he more logically occupies the larger register. It cannot be restated too often that these spaces were left when the text was originally written and occur in various sizes and various positions on the page. One cannot think of any of the paintings as merely the whim of the artist. A definite master plan carries through the entire manuscript, not just the portions that are finished. But at the same time, the nature and position of these spaces offered a real challenge to the ingenuity of the artists, which they often met with great success. In this case the artist (or artists) has ingeniously linked the two registers into a single composition.

In conclusion it seems that various tempos or rhythms of the written text are mirrored in the illustrations. There is a definite ebb and flow to the story,

a slow and a fast telling of the tales. Many of the paintings can be viewed and appreciated individually, as in this brief article, but ideally we should be able to sit with the manuscript and turn the pages, appreciating these paintings fully by seeing each of the scenes in sequence. Space does not permit the illustration of a complete narrative sequence. It is necessary to see a number of these sequences to understand the Mysore artists' accomplishment. It may seem that the size and shape of the available space made one narrative technique more appropriate than another, but a thorough study of all the pages and their relation to one another suggests that the nature of the text, not the space, influenced that choice. Surprisingly few Indian books mix paintings and substantial texts together on the same page. We are fortunate that the creators of Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja's *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* opted for more interaction of words and pictures. Without that decision we would have missed the variety and sheer bravado found in this manuscript. □

Notes

1. I presented a short survey of the painting from this period in a talk entitled "Painting for Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar" at the American Committee for South Asian Art Symposium on South Asian Art in Minneapolis, May 1996. For the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* manuscript, see n. 4.
2. To my knowledge only one page, which is probably from the palace volumes, has ever been published, although a few of the Oriental Research Institute folios have been published and labeled as from the royal copy.
3. A number of pages bound at the end of the volume were intended for illustration. The 143 folios were all finished except a few on which yantras are merely drawn in pencil right before the last painted pages. A few areas for text are also left blank. The volume starts abruptly since some of the initial pages were lost. Folio numbers were added after the loss of the pages.
4. I have discussed this manuscript in some detail in "A *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* Manuscript from Mysore: A Preliminary Analysis," in *Śri Nāgābhinanandanam* (Dr. M. S. Nagaraja Rao Festschrift), ed. L. K. Srinivasan and S. Nagaraju (Bangalore: M.S. Nagaraja Rao Felicitation Committee, 1995), 465–80, pls. CXL–CLII. Fifteen of the folios are published (in color) there:

folios 3v, 10v, 17v (detail), 24v, 28r, 45v, 52v, 102v (detail), 109r, 124r (detail), 125v–126r, 137v–138r, and 150v. Another six folios are illustrated here. Terrence McInerney, *Indian Painting, 1525–1825* (London: David Carrick Limited, 1982) illustrates 34v (in color) and 103v–104r. References to the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* are taken from the *Śrimad Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa*, trans. C. L. Goswami (Gorakhpura: Gita Press, 1971). A number of works datable to Kṛṣṇarāja's reign included here were not known to me when writing the first article. Besides the *Devimahātmya*, discussed briefly below, another manuscript similar to the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* is a *Rāmāyaṇa* that I have not been able to study. See Joshua M. Greene, "Once upon a Time in India, the Adventures of Lord Rama," in *Festival of India in the United States 1985–86* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1985), 218–23, which illustrates three folios from the manuscript. Its colored margins and general layout make it seem more akin to the *Devimahātmya* than either the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* or *Śrītattvanidhi/Svaracūḍāmani* group (see n. 5). A final manuscript that has affinities with both the San Diego *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and the *Śrītattvanidhi* is partially illustrated in Gianni Guadalupi, "Indian Odyssey," *FMR, America* 4 (Milan: Franco Carlo Ricci, Christmas 1985). The claim is made that this manuscript of Niccolò Manucci's *Storio do Mogor* was made for the author in the seventeenth century. It is in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Codex Marcianus It. VI, 136 (=8300). For a reference to a manuscript from Andhra, see n. 27.

5. It has been published in its entirety in *Śri-Tattva-Nidhi*, vol. 1: *Svarachūḍāmani (Rāgamālā Paintings)*, ed. S. K. Ramachandra Rao (Hampi: Kannada University, 1993). He notes that the *rāgamālā* section is found only in the Oriental Research Institute copy. He obviously never saw the McCune Family Trust volume, which does not include a *rāgamālā* section, but another volume that includes it may have existed or may still exist.

6. Sivapriyanda, "Some Illustrated Manuscripts from Mysore," *Marg* 47.3 (1996): 60–64.

7. Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore, no. 370. I was told that the text concerned the *guruparampara* of the Sringeri *matha*. Some of the newsprint used to make the board cover is dated 12 January 1855. A number of prints depict teachers with the god Śiva. A few others, including some complex scenes, depict Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa conversing with and worshipping Śiva, presumably at Rameśvara. The only hand-colored print is that of Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja Woḍeyar. The others merely have a few red highlights added to the black and white lithographs. Ramachandra Rao, *Svarachūḍāmani*, appendix 2, illustrates 30 pages from one of these small lithographed books. The book by Kṛṣṇarāja represents 108 holy names and bears a 1859 date. The images must all refer to the *Śrītattvanidhi*. Ramachandra Rao mistakenly refers to the lithographs as paintings. Two pages from a lithographed *Saugandhika Pariuaya* by Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja of 1850 have been published. See B. S. Kesavan, ed., *The Book in India: A Compilation* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1986), 29, fig. 12.

8. *The Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department for the Year (ARMAD) 1938*, 47–71, pls. XXII–XXXI. Philip Davies, *The Penguin Guide to the Monuments of India*, vol. 2 (London: Viking, 1989), 558–59, erroneously places the entire palace into the twentieth century.

9. *ARMAD* 1935, 63–64, pls. I, XIX, and XX. Davies, *Monuments of India*, 572, places the paintings at ca. 1830, referring to them as crude.

10. The paintings in the Prasanna Kṛṣṇasvāmi temple, discussed briefly below, are not the only paintings remaining from Kṛṣṇarāja's reign at the palace. In the Devī shrine of the Sveta Varāhasvāmi temple some painted wooden doors depicting Kṛṣṇa scenes must also date from this period and were probably originally in the old royal palace. Other paintings on the walls of the Devī shrine and in the Varāha temple itself, sometimes assigned to our period, are obviously later, while a large Coronation of Rāma panel in the same complex is dated to A.D. 1875.

11. Saryu Doshi, "The Art Treasures of Shravana Belgola," in *Homage to Shravana Belgola* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1981), 101–40, figs. 5–12. She offers two alternative dates for the murals, 1750–75 or 1825–50. I am inclined to the later dates. See Del Bontà, "Analysis," n. 8, for a short discussion of style and date.

12. I saw some paintings from this period, including a portrait of the king in the porch of the Jaina *matha* in Mudabidri, on a visit in 1974. In 1995, Dr. Padmanabh S. Jaini informed me that the porch has been altered and repainted.

13. "Representing Sacred Space: Painted Tirthas in a Mysore Temple," paper read for panel "Perspectives in the Interpretation of South Asian Painting," for "Spaces: The Representation and Use of Space in South Asia," Ninth Annual South Asia Conference, University of California, Berkeley, March 1995.

14. Most of the known manuscript painting from this period cannot compete with the sophistication of the compositions of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, but two of the ceilings at the Prasanna Veṅkataramanasvāmi temple can. These elaborate ceilings represent a map of north India—one the Gaṅgā and the other the Yamunā. Viewed one over the other, the two meet at Prayag (Allahabad), rather minimally represented with a large depiction of Varanasi below it. (Prayag also is depicted on folio 148v of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* manuscript.) Elsewhere I have discussed the complex use of the Western-style map, overlaid with site-specific detail (see n. 13). These details consist of either physical or narrative elements associated with the locations. For Kṛṣṇa themes this is clearest in the area of Vraja, with many depictions of his childhood exploits. These depictions of auspicious sites both document the many travels of the king's friend (the saint who built the shrine) and enhance the sanctity of that shrine. They function much like the many royal portraits flanking the throne area in Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇarāja's Jagannāh Palace

and the many groups of portraits found elsewhere during this period. See n. 16.

15. See Del Bontà, "Analysis," particularly pl. CXLI, folio 102v and nn. 7 and 9. As printed, the discussion in that article on pp. 467–68 cites the wrong plate number. The plate being discussed is CXLI. The date given to these stray folios is often 1799, referring to the death of Tipu Sultan.

16. Most notably in the painted hall of the Jagannmohan Palace, ARMAD 1938, pls. XXII–XXVIII and XXXI. There are well over a hundred portraits, including many members of Mummadī Kṛṣṇarāja's court as well as contemporary and historical rulers and ministers from all over India. One of the large walls of Tipu Sultan's palace at Srirangapatna also represents various Indian rulers, but they are placed in elaborate architectural or landscape settings and are not merely simple portraits; Saryu Doshi, ed., *Homage to Karnataka* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1982), 109. As mentioned above, there are also a number of the Wodeyar kings in the painted hall of Prasanna Veṅkataramanasvāmi temple in Mysore. In the palace collection are numerous depictions of the Lotus Progeny (a royal lineage) and sets of portraits of the Mysore rulers. For some published portraits see *Homage to Karnataka*, 7 and 84–85, and Ramachandra Rao, *Svarachūḍāmani*, appendix I.

17. Del Bontà, "Analysis," pl. CXL.

18. I first heard of the Victoria and Albert Museum pages [IS 52-1993] by personal communication from Dr. Ellen S. Smart and was able to see the pages in March 1998. The Los Angeles painting has been published recently (in color) in Vidya Dehejia, ed., *Devi the Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art* (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1999), no. 10. Both sides of what are actually two folios pasted together are shown, one side with the two painted pages (see n. 20) and the other with one page of text and one painted page. The discussion there suggests that this manuscript is the Sanskrit *Devimahātmya* written in Kannada script rather than a version written by Kṛṣṇarāja. Devi's opponent is not identified, but Raktabija is named. Although this is from a known manuscript and the two pages are numbered 51 and 52, they are labeled as recto and verso, when the right-hand side of each sheet would be a recto and the left a verso.

19. Types of Indian narrative have been discussed by Vidya Dehejia in "On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *The Art Bulletin* 72.3 (September 1990): 374–92. Her discussion listing various categories of narrative is aimed at novices to India. Since writing this article, she has published an extended work on narrative, *Discourse in Early Buddhist Art: Visual Narratives in India* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1997). Comments below refer to the article. Of much greater use are discussions in Joanna Williams, *The Two-headed Deer: Illustrations of the Rāmāyaṇa in Orissa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), particularly "Chapter Five: Narrative Strategies." I have noted her warning that *narrative*

is a somewhat loaded word but cannot find a suitable term with which to replace it. Since Williams is discussing the works of many known individual artists, she is concerned more often with how the artists depart from a literal illustration of the text. In fact the nature of the Orissan palm-leaf tradition is quite different from what we find here. The artists of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* offer a quite literal telling of the story as found in the text. For instance, when Kṛṣṇa is described as having four arms, he is depicted with them (see Del Bontà, "Analysis," pls. CXL, CXLII, and CXLIII). At other times he has two arms. Also see Ruth Cecily Katz, *Arjuna in the Mahabharata: Where Krishna Is, There Is Victory* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989) for a lengthy discussion of the nature of Indian oral and written narrative.

20. Del Bontà, "Analysis," pl. CXLII depicts the left half (folio 52v) of these two pages. At least eight of the double pages in that manuscript are true double-page compositions in which the artist has filled in the inside margins. Others in that manuscript are handled differently, with plain margins in between. One might expect that the true double-page compositions with painting through the inner margins would be pages where the paper is folded against itself, but that is not always, if ever, the case in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*. A consideration of n. 24 below reveals that the Naraka double page under discussion (fig. 4) crosses the next-to-last and last page of a quarto. The verso of the right folio was also half of a true double-page composition, with painting into the inner margin. The *Devimahātmya* double page now in Los Angeles appears as one sheet of paper, but the two sheets were pasted together at some unknown point in the past, and a bit of the detail from where the pages met at the spine is now lost. The verso of the right-hand folio has a painting that takes up about two-thirds of the space and crosses over the inner margin. It has been separated from the right half of the composition, folio 53r.

21. Williams, *Two-headed Deer*, often refers to directionality, particularly on p. 119, where the fact that many of her artists were their own scribes may suggest a predisposition to left-to-right readings, but this is not always the case. Elsewhere (p. 122) in a discussion of Raghunath Prusti's work she states, "the direction of movement . . . toward the left, [is] a point of irrationality that perhaps would trouble only the most pedantic viewer." Dehejia's article also deals with direction of movement, linking it with ritual *pradakṣīṇa*, but notes some of her examples go in what she would see as the "wrong" direction.

22. This is especially true in the chapter enumerating Kṛṣṇa's wives and their children (*Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X.lxi). The artists present a series of compositions appropriate to the upbringing of Kṛṣṇa's sons, but the activities depicted are not mentioned in the text contained on folios 67r and 67v. Similarly, folio 109v includes elaborate hunting scenes, which are only suggested at the end of chapter 78. These paintings and others evoke moods that are in keeping with the text.

23. This is discussed most cogently in Williams, *Two-headed*

Deer, 108–11. It is also often mentioned in Katz, *Arjuna in the Mahabharata*. Discussing the various tellers of the *Mahābhārata*, she writes, “Most of the epic is presented in what purport to be the words of Vaishampayana to Janamejaya, as reported by Ugrashrava to Shaunaka” (p. 12). Readers of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* will note the omission of Sanjaya. She goes on to point out that “Dhrtarashtra’s questions and Samjaya’s answers are reported by Vaishampayana.” Vyāsa should also be mentioned. Not only are these stories retold, but the retellings are sometimes reported in the narrative itself. Many stories are told and retold in the same work. Many episodes found in the *Mahābhārata* are also found in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and elsewhere. After all, the same characters are often found in a wide variety of texts. Concerning oral traditions, she states, “suspense is not the most important element of a good tale” (p. 214).

24. As noted in my “Analysis,” n. 14, folios right after this double page (folios 54–57) are missing from the manuscript. They would include a depiction of the stealing of the Pāñjāta tree from Indra’s heaven. Folio 54r is half of a true double page, with the painting crossing the inner margin.

25. See n. 11.

26. Del Bontà, “Analysis,” pl. CXLVII, illustrates the left-hand folio (folio 24v). A similar simple horizontal composition is pl. CXLVIII (folio 17v).

27. Jagdish Mittal has published folios from a *Rāmāyaṇa* manuscript that he assigns to the middle of the eighteenth century from southern Andhra. See his *Andhra Paintings of the Ramayana* (Hyderabad: Andhra Pradesh Lalit Kala Akademi, 1969). The color scheme and use of blank paper for background recall the paintings in the *Śrītattvanidhi*. Most of the pages that he illustrates are divided into friezelike registers. The drawing and coloring are not as polished as that seen in Kṛṣṇarāja’s manuscripts, but some of the poses, details, and compositions bear a striking resemblance to them.

28. Katz, *Arjuna in the Mahabharata*, 186, n. 1, lists various rules of fair combat. Curiously, Kṛṣṇa breaks a major one here by killing Rukmī’s charioteer, who should be out of bounds. Kṛṣṇa as the Viṣṇu *avatāra* of the Kaliyuga does break rules, a fact discussed elsewhere by Katz.

29. The most ambitious narrative of the earlier part of the story concerns the bear Jāmbavān. On folio 34r he kills the lion, which has stolen the jewel, and then he takes it into his lair. His fight with Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s espousal of Jāmbavati are depicted on folio 34v. This page consists of nine scenes in all. See McInerney, *Indian Painting*, no. 36, pp. 80–83. It can be called a linear or cyclical narrative using little framing devices, probably suggested by the cave setting of the scene. This scene is depicted at the lower left of the Datia painting (fig. 10) discussed briefly below. Other compositions in the manuscript are handled in a similar way. A much later Mysore painting, similarly arranged by a turn-of-the-century artist, has been published in Joseph M. Dye III,

“A Painting of the ‘Kiratarjuniyam’ from Mysore,” *Arts in Virginia* 24.3 (1983–84): 10–29.

Space limitations preclude a discussion of many other important compositions in the manuscript. Architectural frames are often used to distinguish separate scenes. Sometimes they are merely placed on different stories of the building or in different rooms. Del Bontà, “Analysis,” pl. CL (folio 109r), illustrates one such usage. The most ambitious use of architectural units to separate scenes described in the text is a page that depicts Pradyumna’s childhood on folio 29v. Other folios of the manuscript may not display a similarly sophisticated use of continuous narration but can be even more ingenious. Balarāma’s dragging of Hastinapura into the river is boldly conceived (folios 103v–104r); see McInerney, *Indian Painting*. The long line signifying his plow links together separate registers from the two pages. A similar use of a bold diagonal links two separate registers on the single page illustrating a scene that gets a casual, but quite descriptive, reference in the text—that of the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest. See Del Bontà, “Analysis,” pl. CXLIX (folio 45v). Although merely mentioned, it was important enough to be “retold” in a very impressive manner. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X.lviii.13–16 describes the scene. See Katz, *Arjuna in the Mahabharata*, chaps. 1C, pp. 71–89, and 3A, pp. 213–24, for a full discussion of the significance of this episode in the *Mahābhārata*. In this painting Kṛṣṇa is depicted as Arjuna’s charioteer, which does not agree with *Mahābhārata*, I.217, where both Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa have their own chariots. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* X.lviii.25 reveals that Kṛṣṇa was his charioteer for this text.

30. This painting was published by Maggs Bros. Ltd. in *Oriental Miniatures and Illumination*, bulletin no. 24, vol. 7, part 3 (December 1975), no. 224. For two other folios from this series see Joachim Bautze, *Lotosmond und Löwenritt: Indische Miniaturmalerei* (Stuttgart: Linden-Museum, 1991), nos. 8 and 9, pp. 48–51. He includes a number of references to other published folios.

31. Figures 4, 8, 9, and 11 from the San Diego *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* can be classified as examples of continuous narration, but they vary a great deal—from simple to complex, straightforward to more complicated. Other folios may appear to use continuous narration but do not. One important example is folio 47v, where Kṛṣṇa multiplies himself to subdue the seven bulls of king Nagnajit of Kosala to win his daughter in marriage (*Bhāgavatapurāṇa* x.lviii.32–46). This scene is handled similarly to Del Bontà, “Analysis,” pl. CLI, the fight between Bhīma and Jarāsandha, but where the figures of Bhīma and Jarāsandha are repeated for the various stages of their fight, in this case seven Kṛṣṇas are shown fighting each of the seven bulls simultaneously.

32. Del Bontà, “Analysis,” pl. LIII (folios 125v–126r).

33. See n. 21.

In the Service of Kṛṣṇa: Paintings from Nathdwara under Dāmodar II and Govardhanlāl

in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY Museum of Art is privileged to have in its collection three Indian paintings with portraits of two of the most revered chief priests (*tilakayāts*) of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* (a Kṛṣṇa sect founded in the late fifteenth century) of Nathdwara: Dāmodar II (officiated 1807–26) and Govardhanlāl (officiated 1877–1934). The *tilakayāts* of Nathdwara were the final arbiters of the doctrine of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* within the entire sect and were free to restructure existing rituals as they saw fit. The standards they set for the architecture, music, poetry, and painting involved in the worship of Kṛṣṇa at Nathdwara were emulated at all the other shrines of the sect. Both Dāmodar II and Govardhanlāl were ardent patrons of painting; many conceptual and stylistic changes were introduced under their dynamic leadership.

Few other Hindu religious orders have afforded paintings as prominent a place in their worship as the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. This emphasis occurred primarily for philosophical reasons, as the sect's founder Vallabhācārya (ca. 1479–1530) expounded a nondualistic philosophy that God is in all and all is in God, which was in direct opposition to the dualistic philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya (ca. 788–820?). Vallabhācārya's ontological beliefs voided previous distinctions made in Hindu philosophy between the human and divine worlds and by implication the distinctions inherent in religious objects made in different mediums.¹ Prior to Vallabhācārya, the prevailing South Asian religious usage of the arts often gave three-dimensional sculpture a higher status than painting because the former was considered

to be a more appropriate domicile for the spiritual presence of the gods manifesting themselves within it.² According to Vallabhācārya, however, sculpture and painting were both equally capable of being endowed with divinity. Thus, Kṛṣṇa could reside not only in revealed stone and metal sculptures but also in paintings.

To consecrate a painting and make it suitable for worship, a Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* priest would pick up the painting, study it, and then offer it consecrated food previously presented to an already “enlivened” image.³ Examples of paintings of Kṛṣṇa being worshipped as a personal deity date back to at least the mid-sixteenth century, when Vallabhācārya's son Gopināth (officiated 1531–43) propagated the worship of painted images.⁴ Although no paintings of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* can yet be attributed to this early period, the worship of paintings is well documented in the biographies of eminent members of the sect. For example, a Kṛṣṇa painting worshipped by a Delhi merchant was the primary instrument in the conversion to the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* of the Muslim Rasakhan, a follower of Gopināth's younger brother Viṭṭhalnāth (officiated 1543–85).⁵

Kṛṣṇa in the form of Śrīnāthjī is the ultimate focus of all Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* religious ritual. The sect's followers believe that Kṛṣṇa appeared to Vallabhācārya in a dream, instructing him to preach the doctrine of a path of salvation dependent on the grace of God (*puṇi mārg*) and entrusting him with the mantra “Śrī Kṛṣṇa śaraṇan mama (Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my refuge).”⁶ Kṛṣṇa also told him about an image of the “child cowherd” (Bālagopāla, an epithet of

Kṛṣṇa), which was half-buried on the holy Mt. Govardhan near Mathura. This image of Kṛṣṇa, with his right arm raised holding Mt. Govardhan aloft as an umbrella to protect the people of Brindaban from the wrath of the storm god Indra, is referred to as Śrīnāthji. The Śrīnāthji image is considered to embody Kṛṣṇa himself (*svarūpa*, literally “own form”) and is the main image of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. When the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) banned the worship of Kṛṣṇa in Mathura and threatened to destroy the temples in 1669,⁷ the presiding *tilakayāt* Dāmodar I (officiated 1667–1704) was forced to flee and took the Śrīnāthji image with him to protect it. Mahārānā Rāj Singh (r. 1652–80) of Udaipur invited Dāmodar I and the Śrīnāthji to his capital and sent a force of 100,000 Rajput warriors to escort the party safely. But the bullock cart containing the image bogged down in the mud twenty-two miles from Udaipur and could not be pulled free, even with the assistance of the escorting troops. This was taken as a divine sign, and in 1671 the Śrīnāthji image was enshrined in a new temple built over it in the village of Sinhar. In honor of the miracle, the name of the village was changed to Nathdwara, the door (*dwār*) of the Lord (*nāth*).

Vallabhācārya arranged for the ceremonial care of the Śrīnāthji image and set up rules for its worship. According to his tenets, the service or worship (*sevā*) that a devotee renders to God was considered to be a spontaneous outpouring of devotion rather than a perfunctory duty. Devotion (*bhakti*) is at the core of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*’s attitude toward life and religion. Its practitioners refer to themselves as those who follow “the path of grace” that Kṛṣṇa taught to Vallabhācārya. While Vallabhācārya had instituted the feeding and dressing of the Śrīnāthji, it was his second son Viṭṭhalnāth who developed the *sevā* into an elaborate system of devotion, which became the center of the ritual worship of the Śrīnāthji image as the most holy embodiment of Kṛṣṇa.

Viṭṭhalnāth gathered poets, musicians, and philosophers to help develop the worship of Śrīnāthji. Devotional hymns (*kirtans*) were made an integral part of the *sevā* and lavish adornments (*śringāras*) were designed for the Śrīnāthji image. Music and

temple decorations were selected for each festival to complement its mood and the particular season. Successive *tilakayāts* refined and augmented the performance of the *sevās*, with those created by Dāmodar II and Govardhanlāl remaining particularly esteemed to this day. These *sevās* were commemorated in paintings, which according to Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* belief enabled the absent devout to celebrate them elsewhere.

Even prior to the founding of Nathdwara, there was great interest in the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* teachings among the rulers of Rajasthan. With the founding of the palace residence (*haveli*) for the Śrīnāthji image at Nathdwara, Rajasthan became the center of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*. Patronage from across Rajasthan was offered to the Śrīnāthji image, and artists from many different courts converged on Nathdwara. As a result, the development of Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* painting at Nathdwara was increasingly influenced by contemporary styles practiced at other Rajasthani painting centers. By the nineteenth century Nathdwara painting had become a hybrid confluence of styles.

When Dāmodar II became *tilakayāt* in 1807, Rajasthan was still suffering the turmoil of the wars initiated by Mahārāja Yawant Rao Holkar of Indore (r. 1798–1811), which culminated in the looting of Nathdwara and the removal of the Śrīnāthji and the other *svarūpa* images to a safer location.⁸ Under these adverse conditions the arts waned, and the number and quality of paintings produced by the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* declined. After the period of disruption, Dāmodar II undertook a campaign of building and refurbishment at Nathdwara. He took a special interest in painting and personally supervised the artistic embellishment of the *haveli* of the Śrīnāthji image by eleven master painters.⁹

Dāmodar II also elaborated upon the *sevā* of the Śrīnāthji image. This reached a peak in 1822 when the seven *svarūpas* of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*, which had been distributed among the descendants of Vallabhācārya and that were enshrined in different temples throughout South Asia, were reunited in the Nathdwara *haveli* of the Śrīnāthji image. A special offering of food and drink known as the fifty-six foods (*chappan bhog*) was presented to the seven

svarūpas. This festival of offering food (*Annakuṭ*), perhaps the most important of the yearly festivals held by the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* in honor of the Śrināthjī image, commemorates the villagers of Brindaban offering food to Kṛṣṇa as the spirit of Mt. Govardhan. Every autumn the villagers offered the fruits of their harvest to Indra, upon whose rain they believed their crops depended. Kṛṣṇa convinced the villagers they should make their offerings to Mt. Govardhan, which overlooked the woods and pastures where they grazed their herds. Kṛṣṇa then took the form of the spirit of the mountain and ate the food that the villagers had brought. Indra was angered by this and caused a devastating storm to destroy the villagers. Kṛṣṇa saved them by raising the entire Mt. Govardhan with his little finger and holding it above them as an umbrella. Indra was humbled and withdrew. Śrināthjī is believed to embody Kṛṣṇa performing this miracle.

This special *Annakuṭ sevā* was hugely popular and was thereafter known as the festival of the seven *svarūpas* (*Sapta Svarūpotsava*). When complimented on the quality of the *sevā*, Dāmodar II declined responsibility and credited Kṛṣṇa as Śrināthjī for its success. Touched by his humility, his mother and the assembled priests (*goswāmīs*) of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* each gave him their personal jewels and ornaments. Dāmodar II was overwhelmed by these spontaneous gifts and commemorated the event by having the jewels and ornaments painted on a tree-of-life motif on a cloth (*pichavāī*) to be hung behind the Śrināthjī image. The *pichavāī* was embroidered with pearls and used in subsequent *Annakuṭ* festivals.¹⁰

A painting depicting Dāmodar II as the priest (*mukhiyajī*) performing the *sevā* for Śrināthjī during the *Sapta Svarūpotsava* festival in 1822 displays several characteristics of the Nathdwara painting style that developed during his tenure as *tilakayāt* (fig. 1).¹¹ The image of Śrināthjī is placed on the central vertical axis of the painting above the horizontal axis. The Śrināthjī is flanked by five images arranged by descending size to achieve a visually balanced composition. The special pearl-embroidered *pichavāī* hangs behind the images. As identified by tradition, Śrimadanmohanjī and his two female companions

and Śrimathurānāthjī are placed to Śrināthjī's right, with Śridwārkānāthjī, Śrigokulchandranāthjī, and an unidentified image placed to his left. The three *svarūpas* on the altar in front of the Śrināthjī are Śrigokulnāthjī, Śrinavanātipriyājī, and Śrīviṭhalnāthjī. The two small Bālakṛṣṇa images in a square niche on the right side of the altar are called Bālakṛṣṇajī and Mukundarayjī.

These latter two images are significant for dating Śrināthjī paintings at Nathdwara. In 1828, the Mukundarayjī was presented to the head *goswāmī* of Kasi (Varanasi) by Lakṣmībahujī, the widow of Dāmodar II. Prior to its removal from Nathdwara, Mukundarayjī was always represented with Bālakṛṣṇajī in paintings of Śrināthjī. Hence, paintings without Mukundarayjī must have been created after 1828.¹² Conversely, however, Mukundarayjī's inclusion in a painting does not necessarily mean that it was painted before 1828. For instance, in a painting securely dated by its dedicatory inscription to 1846, Mukundarayjī is anachronistically depicted in a representation of Dāmodar II's *Sapta Svarūpotsava*.¹³

In the present work there is no indication of space behind the images, as the painted and pearl embroidered *pichavāī* commissioned by Dāmodar II hangs immediately behind them. It is rendered with gold leaf and fine white dots of paint representing the pearls against a plain black background. Depicted in front of the altar are twenty-nine baskets and twenty-seven jars representing the fifty-six types of food offered to Śrināthjī during the *Annakuṭ* festival and a mound of rice representing Mt. Govardhan. A sweet cake (*gunja*) set on top of the rice represents the head of Viṣṇu. The sweets arranged on its four sides symbolize his four arms and allude to Kṛṣṇa's appearance as the lord of the mountain.

To the right of the offerings, Dāmodar II ceremonially waves lamps (*āratī*) in front of the head of Śrināthjī, while on the opposite side his assistant cools the Lord with a fan of peacock feathers. In Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* painting, the *mukhiyajī* performing the *sevā* is always placed to the proper right of the main *svarūpa*. Two *goswāmīs*, one of whom most likely commissioned the painting, and their eldest sons are symmetrically positioned slightly below and to the sides of the *svarūpa*. Recession in



space is achieved with no attempt at Western perspective by placing the more distant figures higher in the picture plane. The figures of the *goswāmīs* are finely painted, and the artist has modeled the forms of their bodies and faces by painting a slightly darker-hued band or strip along and parallel to the outer edges of the figure (*hairikavartanā*). Their eyes are elongated and stylized. The artist was careful to render each of the participants in the ceremony as a distinct individual. Each of the *goswāmīs* is bareheaded, with his hair neatly tied in a knot behind the head. The artist used thick white paint to build each of the pearl earrings into a domed form projecting above the picture plane. The figures of Dāmodar II and his assistant are depicted larger than the rest of the *goswāmīs* in order to emphasize their importance.

The head of Dāmodar II is virtually identical to that in a similar-sized portrait painted after 1828 that represents him performing *āratī* for the Śrīnāthji image on the occasion of the festival of the full moon (*Śarat Purṇamā*), which is now in the collection of Amit Ambalal.¹⁴ The most important difference between the two portrayals of Dāmodar II is the manner in which the edge of the hair is depicted. In the *Annakūṭ* painting, the line marking the parting of the hair is clearly evident above the sideburns and at the base of the neck. In the *Śarat Purṇamā* painting, the parting of Dāmodar's hair has been both simplified and stylized. The part is represented by a fine, continuous line that extends from the top of the sideburns, above the ears, and down to the base of the neck. As the depiction of Dāmodar and his hairstyle is more individualized in the *Annakūṭ* painting than in the more stylized post-1828 *Śarat Purṇamā* painting, it may be inferred that the artist of the *Annakūṭ*

painting either sketched him from life or had access to a life portrait.

In contrast to the images of the *goswāmīs*, the *svarūpa* in the *Annakūṭ* painting are rendered relatively flat and stylized. Only the faces of the *svarūpa* are modeled by the *hairikavartanā* technique. A dark blue-black hue applied just inside the black outlines of the faces subtly accents the cheeks and lips. The faces are wider than they are tall, an iconographic characteristic considered to emphasize that the images portray Krṣṇa as a child.¹⁵

Another commemorative painting, most likely painted at Nathdwara by a visiting artist from Kotah during the late 1890s, depicts the *goswāmī* Vallabhadās performing a special Śrīnāthji *sevā*, the *manoratha* ("cherished desire"), during the spring festival (*Vasant Pañcamī*; fig. 2). The privilege of performing a *manoratha* was granted to only a few honored *goswāmīs* who were direct descendants of Vallabhācārya. As a *goswāmī* might be granted permission to perform a *manoratha* only once in a lifetime, it was common practice to hire the finest artist available to record the event.¹⁶

The image of Śrīnāthji, and the accompanying small images of Bālakṛṣṇaji and Madanmohanji arranged on the altar to his left in this painting, leave no doubt that the location is the Śrīnāthji's *haveli* at Nathdwara. Unusually, all of the participants in and observers of the ceremony are identified on the reverse of the work (fig. 3).¹⁷ Only a few surviving Nathdwara commemorative paintings record any of the participants.

The ornaments and rituals of a *manoratha* service reflect the deepest nature of an individual *goswāmī*'s personal devotion to Krṣṇa as Śrīnāthji. Here Vallabhadās has chosen to attire the Śrīnāthji image as a bridegroom. A bridegroom's crown (*sehra*) adorns his head, a flower garland (*veni*) has been interlaced with his braid (*chōti*), and a tassel (*jhumkha*) affixed to its end. This attire symbolizes the "devotion of a beloved for her lover" (*madhurya bhava*) and Vallabhadās' identification of himself as Krṣṇa's beloved.¹⁸ The red powder on the floor in front of the altar, along with the red and yellow powder on the ceiling, indicates the season is that of the

FIG. 1.

Commemorative Portrait of Dāmodar II (officiated 1807–26) Performing the Ceremony of the Offering of Food to the Seven Images in 1822, *Nathdwara, Mewar, Rajasthan, India, ca. 1822–50, opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper, 13 × 9 7/8 in. (33 × 25.1 cm)*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Jane Greenough Green in memory of Edward Pelton Green, AC1999.127.41.

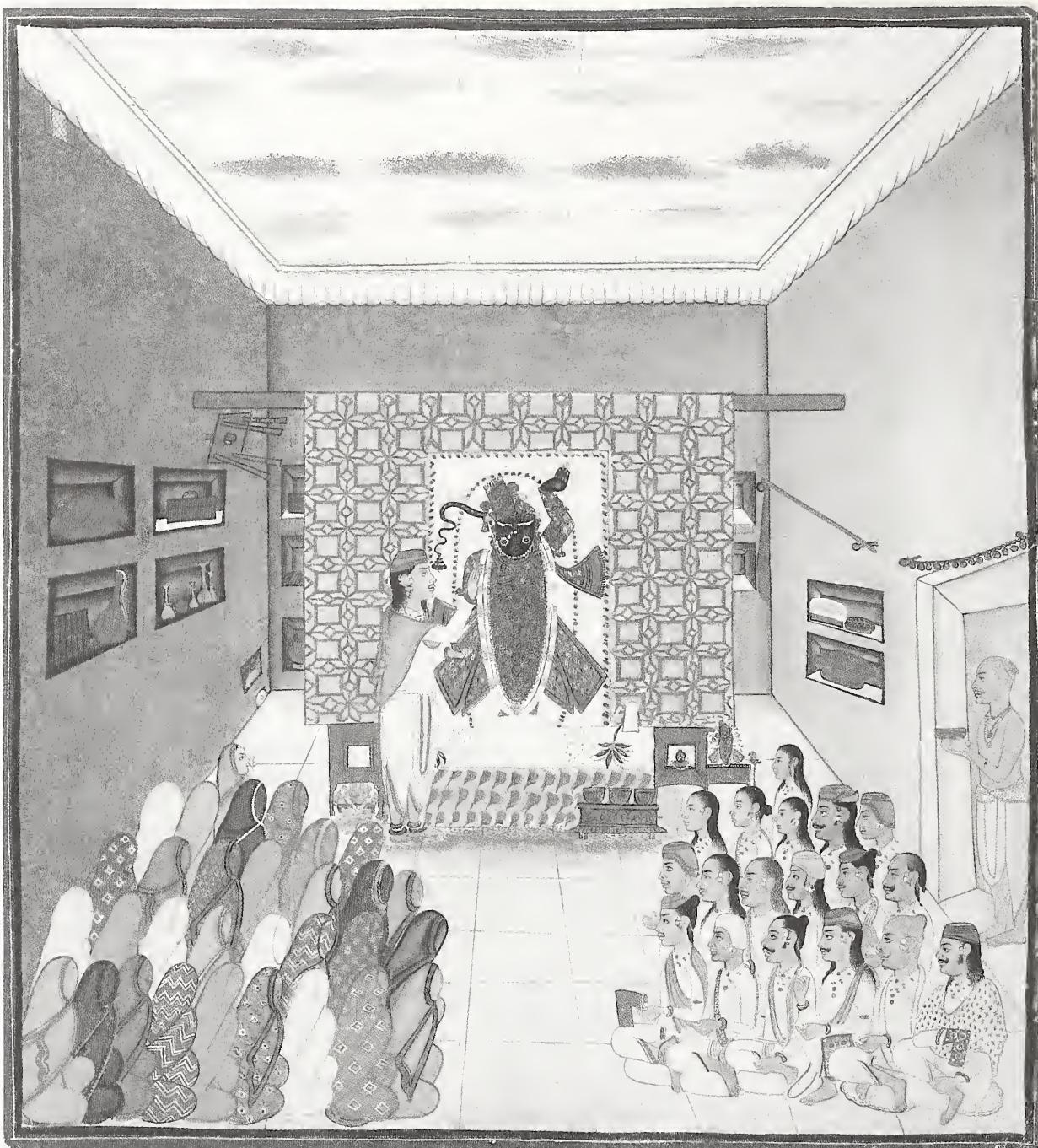


FIG. 2.

Commemorative Portrait of Vallabhadās
Worshipping Śrināthjī during Vasant Pañcamī,
Nathdwara, Mewar, Rajasthan, India, ca.
1890–1900, opaque watercolor and gold on
paper, 13 1/2 × 12 1/2 in. (34.3 × 31.1 cm). Los
Angles County Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and
Mrs. Frank Neustatter, M.73.22.

२५

मुख्योदाजी
वल्लभदास

२ रुद्रम् ३ रुद्रम् ४ रुद्रम् ५ रुद्रम् ६ रुद्रम्
 रुद्रामारप्ती। मुखलीधरजी, बालकृष्णललितजीवनलला। गिरधरलाल
 घनस्त्रीजी। रुद्रनीजी। गुप्तललालगोविलाल। रुद्रवंशलला। शब्द
 विंशतिजी। गिरधरजी। वृत्तनाथजी। वंदेश्वरा। महानीला। गोदैनलाल।

१ नामधार
२ महात्मा लक्ष्मणाहवेक्षबहुजनप्रेमिले ५
३ भूमि ४ गंगा ५ नामधारी
६ मीतरसु। मातृका को प्रती। नामधारी
७ वारद वारद
८ वेदेवाजी। नामधारी। नी। ९ २
वरेक्षेत्रामाजी। जिजीलाला। रामायनीवेदी। १०
११ दी। गांगावेदी। महादेवेक्षबहुजनप्रेमिले १२
१२ उत्तमांकराजी। गोपालवारदवेक्षबहुजी। इकामातृजी,
१३ काकाजी। १४ कोटि। १५
१६ व्रजवरदामायेक्षबहुजी। दूनसामाजी। बहुजी। १७
१८ क्षेत्रवारद १९ वारदधार
२० इनामायेक्षबहुजी। गिरधारजी। बहुजनप्रेमिले २१
२२ दी। गोपनवेदी। व्रजवरदामायेक्षबहुजी। २३
२४ कीदूषप्रेमिले दी। बद्रेश्वरजी। व्रजवरदामायेक्षबहुजी। २५
२६ दोपदेवी। व्रजवरदामायेक्षबहुजी। २७

FIG. 3.

Inscriptions on the reverse of the painting in fig. 2.

Vasaut Pañcamī festival, when the *nukhiyaji* plays *holi* with the Śrināthjī by throwing colored powders at him. The Śrināthjī image's red coat (*gherḍār jāma*) is decorated with a carefully placed, seemingly random pattern of yellow and darker red marks over its entire surface, replicating the stains left by the thrown devotional powders.

Despite its creation by a Kotah artist, this work demonstrates that several significant changes in Nathdwara painting occurred during Govardhanlāl's tenure as *tilakayāt*. Unlike early nineteenth-century Nathdwara paintings based on the forms and style developed under Dāmodar II, here the image of Śrīnāthjī has been lowered to occupy the precise center of the painting, and the *pichavāi* does not obstruct the space behind the image. The artist used a single vanishing point perspective to place the altar of the Śrīnāthjī image in the center of the room and to depict symmetrically the assembled *goswāmīs* and their wives in front of it. Govardhanlāl is seated prominently

nently in the lower right corner. Although the *tilakayāt* is naturalistically depicted the same size as the other participants, his importance is emphasized by his isolation. With only one exception, the women are presented from the rear merely as flowing, rhythmic patterns created by their *saris*. Each of the *goswāmīs* is a distinct, recognizable individual. The artist has modeled each of their faces with *hairikavartauā* around the outer edges, following the painting style that originated under Dāmodar II. He has also used the technique to articulate the jaws, chins, noses, and eyes of the figures. While more attention was paid to the modeling of the faces of the *goswāmīs* than in the earlier painting, less modeling was used depicting the Śrīnāthji image. The proportions of Śrīnāthji's face were also changed so that the height equals the width.

A *pichavāī* painted at Nathdwara during the first quarter of the twentieth century, depicting Govardhanlāl as the *mukhiyajī* performing *sevā* for the festival of the toll (*Dānālilā*), is an example of another



type of painting practiced by the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* (fig. 4). It is a large *pichavāī*, similar to the seasonal *pichavāī* hung behind the *svarūpa* and other Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* images. But because it depicts the *mukhiyajī* and the yearly cycle of the celebrations held in honor of Krṣṇa as Śrīnāthjī, it was most likely painted as a pilgrim's souvenir of a visit to the Śrīnāthjī *havelī* and not used as a hanging behind Śrīnāthjī.¹⁹

While the other Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* festivals have their origins in the *Purāṇas*, the celebration of *Dānalilā* is derived from *Bhaktī* poetry. According to the myth, after the *gopīs* finished milking their cows on the slopes of Mt. Govardhan and were heading toward the market, Krṣṇa waited for them at a break in the mountain that has come to be known as the pass of the toll (*dāna ghati*). He tried to persuade them to give him some of their milk as a toll (*dāna*). When they refused, he caused one of them to spill her pot of milk. The *gopīs* then relented and shared their milk with Krṣṇa. *Pichavāīs* depicting *Dānalilā* are traditionally displayed at Nathdwara during September.

An older Govardhanlāl is portrayed in this painting as standing to the right of the Śrīnāthjī image. *Gopīs* balancing pots of curd on their heads and offering them as a toll to Krṣṇa-Śrīnāthjī are represented on a *pichavāī* within the *pichavāī* that is painted hanging behind the *svarūpa*. The upper portion of the inner *pichavāī* depicts the gods Indra, Brahmā, and a celestial couple paying homage to Krṣṇa as Śrīnāthjī. Across the lower portion of the outer *pichavāī*, palaces, forests, and water tanks are schematically represented on Mt. Govardhan. Below and to the left, Krṣṇa appears as the Spirit of the Mountain and receives the offering of food commemorated in the *Annakuṭ* festival from his foster mother and father, Yasodā and Nanda, along with the villagers of Brāj. To the right, as the *gopīs* prepare to enter a

FIG. 4.

Govardhanlāl (officiated 1877–1934) Worshipping Śrīnāthjī during Dānalilā, *Nathdwara, Mewar, Rajasthan, India, 1900–1925, opaque watercolor on cloth, 80 × 57 1/4 in. (203.2 × 145.4 cm)*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Mary Hunt Kahlenberg in honor of Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, AC1995.102.1.

mountain pass on the way to market, Krṣṇa spills the curds from one of their pots. These two scenes were celebrated with their own separate festivals and would each have been represented individually on a *pichavāī* for use behind the Śrīnāthjī image. The Yamunā River is depicted across the bottom of the *pichavāī* along with a cowherd and cows.

The yearly cycle of the twenty-four principal festivals for the Śrīnāthjī image at Nathdwara is depicted along the top and sides of the *pichavāī*, punctuated by representations of Viṭṭhalnāth in the lower left corner, Vallabhācārya in the lower right corner, and Krṣṇa at the top center of the painting. Krṣṇa is depicted as the infant Nārāyaṇa floating on a leaf in the center of the cosmic ocean sucking his toe, as he appeared to the sage Mārkanḍeya.²⁰ Krṣṇa thus represents a symbol of infinite power that is at the same time infinitely lovable. Beginning on the left side above the image of Viṭṭhalnāth, the swinging ceremony (*Phūl Dol*) associated with the festival of *Holi* begins the cycle that then proceeds in calendrical order. The cycle ends with the festival celebrating the discovery of the Śrīnāthjī image in a cave by Vallabhācārya, which is just above the portrayal of Vallabhācārya preaching.²¹

Although *pichavāīs* are generally conservative in their compositions and less finely executed than the smaller commemorative paintings on paper, the artist of this work has incorporated many of the stylistic changes that occurred in Nathdwara painting during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The altar upon which the Śrīnāthjī image stands was laid out using single vanishing point perspective. This convention was also observed in the placement of the two figures of the *goswāmīs* relative to the image of Śrīnāthjī. The illusion of spatial recession was also applied to the figures of the *gopīs* flanking the Śrīnāthjī image. Even though they were intended as part of a painted *pichavāī* behind the *goswāmīs* and the Śrīnāthjī image, they seem to reach out of the plane to hold their offerings in front of the Śrīnāthjī image. The artist has chosen, however, to ignore Western perspective in portraying the lower scenes of the *Annakuṭ* and *Dānalilā* against the backdrop of Mt. Govardhan. Here flat areas of color were used to define both the landscape and figures. Depth is indicated by overlapping

figures and by placing the most distant images higher in the picture plane.

The image of Śrināthjī in this *pichavāī* exhibits several significant advancements. The face is much taller relative to its width, its modeling is more pronounced, and the traditional blue-black pigment has been replaced by a very dark blue. In a concession to Western naturalism, Śrināthjī's feet are now depicted facing forward rather than splayed to the sides, a stylistic innovation introduced early in Govardhanlāl's tenure as *tilakayāt*.²² Yet the artist has again reverted to an earlier tradition for depicting the images of Śrināthjī around the outer edge of the *pichavāī* that represent the cycle of yearly festivals. They are flat and schematic, and their heads less elongated than that of the central image.

Between the accession of Dāmodar II as *tilakayāt* in 1807 and the death of Govardhanlāl in 1934, paintings of Śrināthjī *sevā* evolved by adopting aspects of the artistic styles current at neighboring courts. Beginning with the transformation of a provincial style into one of studied elegance, artists at Nathdwara continued to incorporate the latest artistic innovations into their work.

Under Dāmodar II, commemorative paintings demonstrate an increased emphasis on documenting the *sevā* of the Śrināthjī image and the other *svarūpa*. There is a greater concern for representing the *goswāmīs* as distinct individuals, but they are portrayed using traditional South Asian artistic techniques. A hierarchy of scale is observed, and the Śrināthjī image is portrayed in a partially abstract fashion. Under Govardhanlāl at the end of the nineteenth century, the artists of the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya* followed the artists of other courts in Rajasthan by adapting Western aesthetics and techniques. The creation of a more realistic space through Western perspective, along with the accompanying abandonment of the hierarchical scale and the continued development of portraiture, resulted in a subtle lessening of the pictorial emphasis of Kṛṣṇa as Śrināthjī. As the *goswāmīs* and other participants in the ceremonies were portrayed as important and distinct individuals, the importance of the image of Śrināthjī in the overall composition was reduced. Conversely, however, these changes served to make

the pictorial representations of the *sevā* of the Śrināthjī image more immediate and more suitable as objects of personal devotion for the followers of the *puṣṭi mārg*. The influence of Western aesthetics became even more pronounced during the first quarter of the twentieth century with the incorporation of illusionistic painting techniques. This trend culminated under Govardhanlāl with the introduction of paintings based on photographs and actual hand-colored photographs that were used to document the *sevā* of Kṛṣṇa as Śrināthjī.²³

Notes

It is a great pleasure to dedicate this paper to Walterji. No other professor of South Asian art has given his students such a vital combination of humanism and sound research methodology. As we share our knowledge with others, his name will be honored as our teacher, and his wisdom and compassion will be imparted to those who follow in his learned footsteps.

1. For a discussion of the difference between the Vedāntas of Śaṅkarācārya and Vallabhācārya, see Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhācārya* (Faridabad: Thomson Press, 1976), 64–65.
2. For the most comprehensive discussion of the position of paintings as objects of worship by the Vallabhācārya *Sampradāya*, see Woodman Taylor, “Picture Practice: Painting Programs, Manuscript Production, and Liturgical Performances at the Kotah Royal Palace,” in *Gods, Kings, and Tigers: The Art of Kotah*, ed. Stuart Cary Welch (Munich: Prestel, 1997), 61–72.
3. Taylor, “Picture Practice,” 63.
4. Amit Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji: Rajasthani Paintings from Nathdwara* (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 1987), 61.
5. Taylor, “Picture Practice,” 63.
6. For a detailed interpretation of *puṣṭi mārg*, see O. C. Gangoly, “A Group of Vallavacharya, or Nath-Dwara Paintings and Their Relatives,” *Bulletin of the Baroda State Museum and Picture Gallery* 1.2 (1944): 31–39.
7. Jadunath Sarkar, trans., *Maāsir-I-Ālamgiri: A History of the Emperor Aurangzib-Ālamgir (Reign 1658–1707) of Sāqi*

Mustād Khan (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947; rpt. ed., New Delhi: Oriental Books, 1986), 51–52.

8. Lieutenant Colonel James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, vol. 1, rpt. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass, 1971), 529–30.

9. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, 68.

10. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, 67. The design of the painted *pichavāī* embroidered with pearls created by Dāmodar II continues to be used today for the *pichavāī* hung behind Śrīnāthji at Nathdwara during the annual *Annakūṭ* festival.

11. See also Pratapaditya Pal, Stephen Markel, and Janice Leoskho, *Pleasure Gardens of the Mind: Indian Paintings from the Jane Greenough Green Collection* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 1993), 44–45, no. 11.

12. Pal, Markel, and Leoskho, *Pleasure Gardens*, 83.

13. Pal, Markel, and Leoskho, *Pleasure Gardens*, 66.

14. Pal, Markel, and Leoskho, *Pleasure Gardens*, 112–13 and 154. Ambalal's hypothesis concerning the presence of Mukundarayji is valid only for paintings of subjects other than Dāmodar's *Sapta Svarūpotsava*. As only Baālakṛṣṇaji and not Mukundarayji is depicted in his painting of Dāmodar II performing ārati on Śarat Purṇamā day, it cannot have been painted before 1828.

15. Pal, Markel, and Leoskho, *Pleasure Gardens*, 84.

16. Pal, Markel, and Leoskho, *Pleasure Gardens*, 80.

17. I am indebted to Ranjit Roy, Los Angeles, for the following transcription of the inscribed names on the reverse of the painting. Except Govardhanlāl, none of the identified figures is mentioned in the scholarly literature on Nathdwara painting.

[Men]

Mukhiyaji Vallabhadas

1. Madhusudhanlāl
2. Kalyanrajī
3. Muralidharji
4. Bālakṛṣṇalāl
5. Jiwānlāl
6. Giridharlāl
7. Ghanaśyamji
8. Raghuṇāthji
9. Gupallāl
10. Gopallāl
11. Raghuṇāthlāl
12. Balakdanji?
13. Cimanji
14. Giridanji

15. Brijanathji

16. Pannalāl

17. Madhulāl

18. Govardhanlāl

Nathdwara

[Women]

1. Nath [Nathdwara]: Lalsahib's first wife
2. Math [Mathura]: elder brother's wife
3. Father's younger brother's wife
4. Kasi: grandmother Śyama's daughter
5. Nath [Nathdwara]: sister
6. Nath [Nathdwara]: Nashyo's daughter
7. Surat: elder brother's wife
8. Dwarka: elder sister Lāli
9. Godhan's daughter
10. Vraja's daughter
11. Ganga's daughter
12. Madhu's wife Girija
13. Father's sister's daughter
14. Mother of the Mahārājā of Kankaroli
15. Gokul: Gopallāl's wife
16. Gokul: Chanak's mother
17. Kak [Kankaroli]: Gopal's wife
18. Kak [Kankaroli]: Elder Vrajavallabha's wife
19. Kotah: Chanaśyamji's wife
20. Their daughter Cuni
21. Kotah: Raghuṇāth's wife
22. Nath [Nathdwara]: Giridhalji's wife
23. Nath [Nathdwara]: Pannalāl's wife
24. Kak [Kankaroli]: Beni's daughter
25. Kak [Kankaroli]: Godhan's daughter
26. Ahmedabad: Vrajarājji's wife
27. Uncle Vrajanāth's (twin?) daughters
28. [Mathura]: Big Ganga's daughter
29. [Mathura]: Younger Canda's daughter
30. Muralidhar's (twin?) daughters
31. Nath [Nathdwara]: Elder Carolā's daughter
32. Nath [Nathdwara]: Younger Kamalā's daughter.

18. For a comparable painting, see Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, 116 and 155.

19. Several variant forms of *Dānalilā pichavāī* are described in Kay Talwar and Kalyan Krishna, *Indian Pigment Paintings on Cloth* (Ahmedabad: Calico Museum, 1979), 23–25, no. 11–15.

20. Walter M. Spink, *Krishnamandala: A Devotional Theme in Indian Art* (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan Press, 1971), 104–7.

21. For a detailed description of the yearly cycle of Vallabhācārya festivals at Nathdwara as they are portrayed on *pichavāī*, see Robert Skelton, *Rājasthāni Temple Hangings of the Krishṇa Cult from the Collection of Karl Mann*, New York (New York: The American Federation of Arts, 1973), 84–97.

22. Spink, *Krishnamandala*, 28.

23. For examples of Nathdwara Vallabhācārya paintings based on photographs and colored photographs, see Ambalal, *Krishna*

as *Shrinathji*, 146–48. But only painted images can be consecrated for worship, not printed ones. See Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, 79.

The Cleveland Museum's Kṛṣṇa Govardhana and the Early Phnom Da Style of Cambodian Sculpture

All . . . run to Govinda for protection, and . . .
The Blessed one said: this unseasonable tempest,
this wind and sandstorm are sent by Indra to de-
stroy us. . . . Because the world sees me as its
refuge and protector I will save it. Thus spoke
Krishna and with one hand lifted Mount Govar-
dhana by the base, holding it high in the air as
easy as a child lifts a mushroom.

*Bhāgavata-purāṇa*¹

THIS ELOQUENT DESCRIPTION of Kṛṣṇa as the savior of mankind, found in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, provides the iconographic essence underlying the famous Preangkorean image from Phnom Da in the Cleveland Museum of Art's collection (fig. 1). Aside from the purely aesthetic appeal of this sculpture (in terms of both its physical beauty and spiritual content), it represents the earliest² and rarest phase of Cambodian sculpture, known as "Phnom Da style" (first half of the sixth century), which became the prototype for the entire production of later sculpture in Cambodia. The beauty and rarity of the Cleveland Museum sculpture is further enhanced by the very unusual story of the excavation of the missing fragments of the sculpture and its restoration. All of which classifies the Kṛṣṇa Govardhana image as an outstanding object—perfect to pay tribute to the Great Teacher, Scholar, and Friend to whom this issue of *Ars Orientalis* is dedicated.

FIG. 1.

Kṛṣṇa Govardhana (*after restoration*), H. 208 cm,
with tenou (not visible here) 244 cm, early Phnom Da
style, first half of sixth century. Cleveland Museum of
Art Purchase, John L. Severance Fund, 73.106.



FIG. 2.

The stage room of the Stoclet residence, Brussels, with the torso of Kṛṣṇa Govardhana, photographed in the 1930s. Courtesy Mme Adolphe Stoclet.



FIG. 3 (NEAR RIGHT).

Kṛṣṇa Govardhana
(before restoration),
H. 119 cm, early
Phnom Da style, first
half of sixth century.
Cleveland Museum of
Art Purchase, John L.
Severance Fund,
73.106.



FIG. 4 (FAR RIGHT).

Harihara, H. 168 cm,
early Phuom Da style,
first half of sixth
century. Musée
Guimet, Paris.





FIGS. 5–7.
Viṣṇu Triad,
early Phnom Da
style, first half of
sixth century.
National
Museum, Phnom
Penh.

5 (FAR LEFT).
Balarāma,
H. 176 cm.

6 (MID LEFT).
Eight-armed
Viṣṇu, H. 270 cm
(according to
Dupont).

7 (NEAR LEFT).
Rāma,
H. 176 cm.

The Cleveland Museum's Krśna, in its form prior to reconstruction (figs. 2 and 3), is one of the better-published sculptures.³ It entered the museum's collection in 1973, after the death of its previous owner, Monsieur Adolphe Stoclet, who acquired it in 1920. It was excavated a few years earlier, in 1912, as one of the first of eight sculptures that represent the early Phnom Da style. The only one found prior to it is the Harihara image in the Musée Guimet in Paris (fig. 4)⁴. These two Phnom Da sculptures are the only ones of that group that found their way into Western collections; the six others remain in the National Museum in Phnom Penh.

It should be clarified, right away, that we refer to the earliest phase of the Phnom Da style, which Pierre Dupont in his opus on Preangkorean sculpture⁵ defines as "Style A." This style corresponds to the first half of the sixth century, or more precisely, to the reign of the Funanese King Rudravarman (514–39). Dupont makes the distinction between this early

phase and the later one, dating from the second half of the sixth century, which he labels "Phnom Da Style B." Many more examples are known of Style B than of Style A.

While Dupont is responsible for establishing this chronology, his theory has strong support in the existing inscription that was found in Phnom Da. The inscription dates from the twelfth-thirteenth century, and it refers to several sculptures made by order of King Rudravarman. The sculptures mentioned in the inscription seem to correspond to those found at Phnom Da, which Dupont defines as Style A.

The inscription lists the statues of "Hari Kambujendra, Nārāyana, Krishna Govardhana and Vishnu Trivikrama."⁶ It has been fairly well established that Hari Kambujendra ("Lord of Cambodia") refers to the monumental eight-armed image of Viṣṇu (fig. 6)⁷ now in the National Museum in Phnom Penh, which forms a trinity with two other sculptures: Balarāma (fig. 5)⁸ and Rāma (fig. 7).⁹ Since they form



FIG. 8.
Kṛṣṇa Govardhana from Vat Koh,
H. 160 cm, early Phnom Da style,
first half of sixth century.
National Museum, Phnom Penh.

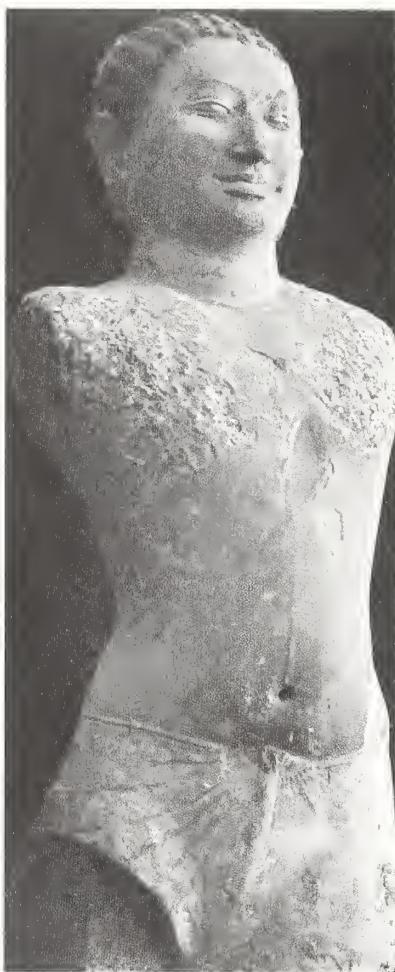


FIG. 9.
Trivikrama, *H. 117 cm, early*
Phnom Da style, first half of sixth
century. National Museum, Phnom
Penh.



FIG. 10.
Paraśurāma, *H. 140 cm, early*
Phnom Da style, first half of
sixth century. National Museum,
Phnom Penh.

a group, the inscription does not mention the Balarāma and Rāma images separately.

The Nārāyaṇa image mentioned in the inscription probably refers to the Musée Guimet's Harihara (fig. 4),¹⁰ while Kṛṣṇa Govardhana must be the Cleveland Museum's Kṛṣṇa (fig. 1).¹¹ The only other Kṛṣṇa Govardhana image known is the Kṛṣṇa from Vat Koh, which is about 4 kilometers north of Phnom Da (fig. 8).¹²

Finally, the last sculpture mentioned in the inscription, Trivikrama, is probably an incomplete figure, now also in the National Museum in Phnom Penh, which Dupont identified incorrectly as another Kṛṣṇa Govardhana image (fig. 9).¹³ Although not

enough of the sculpture is left to be absolutely certain, there is no indication of the raised arm, as one would expect of the Kṛṣṇa image, but the proper right leg of the statue seems to indicate that it was lifted up—as if taking a step—which is consistent with the iconography of Trivikrama.

The last of the six Phnom Da Style A images in the National Museum in Phnom Penh, not mentioned in the inscription, is the sculpture of Paraśurāma (fig. 10).¹⁴ This figure was omitted from the inscription because by the time the inscription was written, in the twelfth-thirteenth century, the sculpture had been converted by the pious Buddhist monks of Phnom Da into a Buddha by the addition of a coat of

stucco and lacquer,¹⁵ and consequently was not recognized as a Hindu sculpture.

All these sculptures representing Dupont's Style A, with the exception of the Vat Koh Kṛṣṇa, were excavated within an area of four cave temples and the stone edifice known as the Ashram Maha Rosei at the site of Phnom Da¹⁶ (thus the designation of this style). Phnom Da is a small hamlet in southern Cambodia, about 3 kilometers north of Angkor Borei. The six sculptures of this style that remain in Cambodia were found after the two in Western collections. Four of them (the Vat Koh Kṛṣṇa and the eight-armed Viṣṇu Triad with Balarāma and Rāma as attendants) were excavated by Henri Mouger in 1935, and the other two (Paraśurāma and Trivikrama, along with the missing fragments of the feet of the Musée Guimet's Harihara)¹⁷ by Pierre Dupont in 1944. They form a homogeneous group. All are monumental sculptures, life-size or larger. The material they are made from is a local gray stone, *calcareous greenwacke*, which in lay terms is a derivative of lime and sandstone. The sculptures are artistically and technically very accomplished. They are fashioned in the round, a genre perfected in Cambodian sculpture, with highly polished surfaces that may have been inspired by the bronze-casting technique.¹⁸

As far as the iconography of these sculptures is concerned, they all represent Hindu, or more precisely, Vaiṣṇava, deities. The main image of Viṣṇu (Hari Kambujendra) is complemented by his incarnations (*avatars*) of Rāma, Balarāma, Paraśurāma, Vikrama, and Kṛṣṇa.¹⁹ This seems to suggest that Phnom Da was a place of Hindu worship, unlike nearby Angkor Borei, where the majority of sculptures found are Buddhist. It is known that Angkor Borei was the Funanese capital during the seventh century (the reign of King Bhavavarman II, 635–56). Since the majority of sculptures dating from the sixth century were found in Phnom Da and Angkor Borei, it is logical to assume that it was already the Funanese capital during that time. The syncretism of Hinduism and Buddhism is one of the characteristics of Cambodian sculpture. Even though at times one religion may have dominated over the other, generally they seem to have coexisted side by side. Later on, from the Indian concept of the *cakravartin* (universal monarch) arose the purely Cambodian cult of the

Deva-Rāja (God-King), which identified the autocratic ruler with God, be it Hindu or Buddhist.

An examination of the Phnom Da sculptures raises the question of why this earliest precursory style is so highly accomplished. Since there is no prior artistic tradition in Cambodia, one would expect a much less sophisticated style. The answer to this question is relatively simple. Various written sources, such as the Chinese chronicles (e.g., *History of Liang*) and numerous early Sanskrit inscriptions found in Cambodia, leave little doubt that Southeast Asia was colonized at that time by Indian settlers and that its art was under direct Indian influence.

The Funan Empire, which produced the early Preangkorean sculpture, extended roughly over the Mekong River delta. This geographic location made it an important center on the trade routes between India and China. From the artifacts found there and from what little is known of its history, we can conclude that the Funan Empire was deeply indebted to India for much of its culture. The history of the beginnings of the empire, although shrouded in legends and folktales, points to the Indianization of this part of Asia from very early times onward. Even if we assume that the legendary Kaudinya—as tradition has it, a Brahmin and the founder of the Funan Empire—was none other than the King Kaudinya who ruled ca. 400–420 C.E., we have evidence of the Indianization of Cambodia from the fifth century onward. The names of rulers, following Kaudinya, are Indian, ending with the suffix *varman* (victorious), which undoubtedly originated in south India. One can also speculate that among the Indian immigrants were trained artists who brought with them technical skills and based their work on Indian prototypes. As suggested earlier, there may also have been smaller objects, such as bronzes, brought from India that served as additional models for the Preangkorean style.

These similarities between the early Cambodian and Indian sculpture can be verified through comparison of the two styles. The influence did not come from one specific place but rather from different localities. One can cite relationships with north-central Indian sculpture, such as Deogarh (ca. 500); western Indian sculpture, such as the Śiva cave temple at Elephanta (ca. 550); sculptures from the Deccani plateau: early Ellora and Aurangabad caves



FIG. 11.
Plate with a Scene of Revelry, *India, Gupta period, fifth century, alloy of silver, tin, and lead with traces of gilt, diam. 18.7 cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund, 72.71.*

(sixth–seventh century); and south India: Mamallapuram (seventh century). In the instance of the Cleveland Museum's Kṛṣṇa Govardhana, the dominating influence is Gupta. Even among the Cleveland Museum of Art's holdings one can find close stylistic parallels, such as the Gupta metal plate (fig. 11) on which the center male figure, although executed in a different medium and in relief, is remarkably close to the Preangkorean Kṛṣṇa and other Phnom Da images.

The three-dimensionality and plasticity of the Kṛṣṇa Govardhana sculpture, which takes its source in the Gupta style with its *prana* (inner breath) quality, is equally evident in the relief executed on the plate. The Kṛṣṇa's torso swells with this "inner breath," creating a lively and vibrant image. A great deal of attention is paid to the anatomic details of the sculpture. The definition of the pectoral muscles, as well as the bicep of the left, raised arm with its prominently displayed axilla, for instance, subtly emphasizes the musculature of the figure. Now that the sculpture has been reconstructed, it is evident that the weight of the body rests on the proper left leg, while the right one is slightly bent and relaxed. The upraised arm gives a twist to the torso, which con-

veys very convincingly the effort involved in lifting up the mountain. The body, which is treated with great sensitivity, displays both youthful fitness and vigor. Kṛṣṇa, like all other Phnom Da images, wears a *sampot* (thin loincloth), which clings closely to the body and is supported by a string with a buckle. The converging folds of the almost transparent drapery are marked by incisions, rather than a more voluminous rendering of the cloth, in order to emphasize the modeling of the body itself. The total lack of ornaments in these sculptures serves the same purpose, directing the viewer's attention to the physical beauty and perfection of the figure. The areas of "flesh" are highly polished, giving the impression of skin tightly stretched over the body. The practice of stone polishing has a long tradition in India, beginning in Maurya times and continuing—if to a lesser degree—during the Gupta age, particularly in the Sarnath School, which in turn must have inspired Preangkorean sculpture.

The same perfection and beauty are reflected in the facial type, which, although conventionalized to a certain degree, is nonetheless very successful in expressing the psychological depth of the image. The face is round, with narrow, almond-shaped eyes, gently arched eyebrows, aquiline nose (now damaged), and large sensuous lips. The long pierced earlobes probably once had detachable metal earrings. The hair is braided into rows of long ringlets with a chignon on the top, which probably represents a wig with the line of natural hair showing underneath, directly above the forehead. Similar hair appears in other Phnom Da sculptures. Wigs are known to have been in style in Gupta India.

The semi-smiling expression of the face, a mark of all Phnom Da sculptures, provides a spiritual dimension. This smile, signifying understanding, compassion, and peace of mind, is one of the characteristics of Asian sculpture, frequently referred to as the "mysterious Eastern Smile." Its origins go back to the Gupta style in India, and it is popularized by Preangkorean as well as later Cambodian sculpture.

The Cleveland Museum of Art sculpture was conceived as a stele, similar to the sculpture of Kṛṣṇa Govardhana from Vat Koh (fig. 8), as is evident now after its restoration. Since Cambodian sculpture from its inception was of a considerable size and attempted

to be sculpture in the round, it faced the problem of supporting a great deal of weight. Comparatively thin legs did not assure a firm support for these monumental images. Thus, either a stele (like figs. 1 and 8), arches (figs. 4 and 6), side or central struts (figs. 5–7 and 10) were used to provide additional support.

All the same, sculpture in the round is more prone to breaking. Consequently almost all excavated Phnom Da sculptures were damaged to a certain degree. Some of them have been partially reconstructed by the addition of separately found fragments. Others have remained incomplete since the missing parts were never found or since no one made an attempt to restore them.

In the case of the Cleveland Museum of Art's Krśna Govardhana, the fragments of the lower body were found in 1935 when the French Archaeological Mission resumed excavations in Phnom Da. At that time the only two extant sculptures of that style were the Krśna Govardhana, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, and the Harihara in the Musée Guimet (which, aside from the missing feet, found later, was more or less complete). Thus, the excavators concluded that the fragments belonged to the sculpture of Krśna (then in the Adolphe Stoclet collection), and arrangements were made to send these fragments to Stoclet in Brussels.

All this, I discovered only much later. The initial idea that the missing fragments of the sculpture might exist came from the literature itself. Gilberte De Coral-Rémusat²⁰ mentioned the excavation of sculptural fragments in Phnom Da, while Pierre Dupont²¹ reproduced a photograph of the legs, which prompted me to suggest a fictional reconstruction when I first published the Krśna Govardhana sculpture.²²

What followed next was the discovery of old photographs of an attempted reconstruction of the sculpture while it was still in the possession of Adolphe Stoclet. They came from two different sources: Paul Melon—a European art dealer, friend of the Stoclets and Janine Schotmans, and at that time curator of Indian Art at the Musée Cinquantenaire in Brussels—and Mme Schotmans' father, Marcel Wolfers—a well-known sculptor and artist in Brussels as well as a close acquaintance of Stoclet who tried to restore the sculpture for Stoclet. He lived in a house separated only by a wall from the Stoclet residence. It was

on the grounds of this lovely villa, which Marcel Wolfers sold shortly after his attempt to restore the Krśna sculpture, that I found the first evidence of the sculptural fragments. The left thigh of the statue (with the unmistakable fold incisions of the *sampot* on it) framed one of the flowerbeds in the garden. Obtaining this proof that sculptural fragments were once present there, I tried to find out from the new owners of Marcel Wolfers' house what became of them. They vaguely recalled that the pieces of broken sculptures were there when they purchased the house and thought that they might have been buried shortly afterwards. The water cistern adjacent to the house was installed and, partially to give it support and partially to get rid of the useless fragments, they were buried around it. The exception was the above-mentioned fragment of a thigh, which was overlooked.

The long negotiations with the owners that followed led to permission to "excavate" the buried fragments. What complicated this matter was that the excavation would damage their beautiful garden. Nonetheless the owners eventually proved sympathetic toward the cause and approved the excavation. Gardeners in the employment of Mme Stoclet, who at the time was still alive, were used for this task.

The excavation began on an early October morning in 1976 (fig. 12), and it took only a short time to reveal, one by one, seventeen sculptural fragments—legs, arms, etc.—obviously more than one could claim belonged to the Cleveland Museum's sculpture of Krśna Govardhana. But bearing in mind that at the time when the École Française excavated them in Phnom Da (in 1935) there were only two sculptures of the Phnom Da style known, it is not surprising that all the fragments were forwarded to Brussels. As the larger pieces were unearthed, the soil was carefully sifted for smaller fragments. Our team of gardeners showed great skill and competence in this respect, missing nothing. The pieces were buried no deeper than one or two feet under the surface—unfortunately shallow enough for rain water to penetrate easily, causing considerable damage to the stones during the forty years of their burial.

Many months later, in the Cleveland Museum of Art's conservation laboratory, the slow process of restoration began. The major problem was to determine which pieces belonged with the sculpture. The

FIG. 12.

Excavations of sculptural fragments in Brussels,
photographed in 1976.



fragments were small enough and there was sufficient loss in the break areas to leave doubts and to offer various possibilities. In this process of reassembling the sculpture we soon came to understand why the Stoclet team had abandoned the project.

Yet once it was determined which fragments belonged to the sculpture, the task of joining them together began. It required much technical skill and precision, considering the weight of the sculpture. A solid steel plate²³ served as a basic support, to which fragments of the stele and the sculpture were attached by twelve bolts. An additional thirteen bolts were used to join the sculpture together. The work of drilling and placing the pins was followed by the process of joining various parts with epoxy, filling some areas with plaster, and finally by the “cosmetic work” of reattaching the loose pieces of the outer surface of the stone. This is a highly simplified account of several months of restoration work. The final result testifies that the museum conservation team did not lack skill and inventiveness. The reassembled sculpture is the same *tour de force* and has the same sculptural balance as one finds in the well-known Kṛṣṇa Govardhana of Vat Koh (fig. 8).

In summation it should be said that more than

the ravages of time account for the damage that the sculptures from Phnom Da have suffered. Even those of them that are more or less complete now were once broken and have since been restored. Pierre Dupont provides a credible explanation for this fact.²⁴ According to him the damage was done by thieves. The sculptures, originally placed in deep sockets and held by long tenons projecting from the bottom of their bases to keep them in a vertical position, were toppled to the ground with levers. Thieves, in their relentless search for valuables frequently deposited under the tenon during consecration ceremonies, destroyed far greater treasures than they could have hoped to find under the tenons.

One would like to think that humanity is more enlightened today and directs better efforts toward the preservation of our cultural heritage. But can this claim be safely made? Although all six Phnom Da sculptures in the National Museum in Phnom Penh miraculously survived the ordeal of Pol Pot’s regime, the fragments unearthed in Brussels (those that do not belong to the Cleveland Museum’s Kṛṣṇa Govardhana image and probably belong to the other Phnom Da images in the National Museum in Phnom Penh) still wait in Cleveland to be reclaimed. □

Notes

1. *Bhāgavatapurāya* X.25.19–26. Quoted in Madeleine Giteau, *Khmer Sculpture and the Angkor Civilization* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1965), 39–40.
2. Most scholars agree with that assumption, although Jean Boisselier in recent years apparently suggested (in his Paris lectures) shifting the dating of the Phnom Da style from the sixth to eighth century. (See Albert LeBonheur's entry in *Rarities of the Musée Guimet* (New York: The Asia Society, 1975), 47, and Hiram Woodward, Jr., "The State of Thai Studies: History of Art" (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, unpublished draft version, 18, n. 19). To my knowledge Professor Boisselier never advanced this theory in a publication.
3. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (New York: E. Weyhe, 1927), pl. CX; Pierre Dupont, *La Statuaire préangkorienne* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1955), pls. VA, VIIB; Otto Fischer, *Die Künste Indiens, Chiua und Japans*, Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte, vol. 4 (Berlin: Propyläen-verlag, 1928), 226; *Arts et archéologie khmers*, 2 (Paris: A. Challamel, 1924–2), pl. XXX; Henri Parmentier, *L'Art khmère primitif*, Publications de L'École Française d'Extrême Orient, vol. 21 (Paris; G. Vanosst, 1927), 121, fig. 84; Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1953), 155.
4. The Harihara in the Musée Guimet in Paris was excavated by Aymonier in 1882–83. E. Aymonier, *Le Cambodge*, vol. 1 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1900), 199–200.
5. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, 25.
6. George Coedes, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, L'École Française d'Extrême Orient, vol. 2 (Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extreme Orient, 1942), 155–56.
7. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, 28, pls. III–IV; Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, "Hari Kambujendra," *Artibus Asiae* 27 (1964–65): 72–78. Richard M. Cooler, "Sculpture, Kingship and the Triad of Phnom Da," *Artibus Asiae* 40 (1978): 29–40.
8. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, pls. VB and VIA.
9. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, pls. VIB
10. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, pl. II.
11. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, pl. VA.
12. Hanri Mouger, *Bulletin de L'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 35 (Hanoi, 1935): 491; Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, pl. IA.
13. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, pl. VIIIA.
14. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, pl. IB.
15. Giteau, *Khmer Sculpture*, 41.
16. *Arts et archéologie khmers* 2.3 (1924–26): 141. Louis Frederic, *The Art of Southeast Asia* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1965), figs. 251–52.
17. The sculpture of Harihara was never restored, and the feet were never reattached to it.
18. This suggestion was advocated by Sherman Lee (*Ancient Cambodian Sculpture* [New York: Asia Society, 1969], 17). Small portable Indian bronzes, which could have been easily carried to Southeast Asia, may have served as models for Preangkorean sculpture.
19. Alain Daniélou, *Hindu Polytheism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 169–80.
20. Gilberte De Coral-Rémusat, "L'Activité archéologique dans l'Inde Exterieure," *Revue des Arts Asiatiques* 10 (1936): 211–26, esp. 225–26.
21. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, 29, pl. VIIIB.
22. Stan Czuma "A Masterpiece of Early Cambodian Sculpture," *CMA Bulletin* 41 (April 1974): 117–27, fig. 13.
23. The plate is three-quarters of an inch thick and ten feet high by twenty-seven inches wide.
24. Dupont, *Statuaire préangkorienne*, 28.

HECKMAN
B I N D E R Y, I N C.
Bound-To-Pleas^e

JUNE 02

N. MANCHESTER, INDIANA 46962

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION LIBRARIES



3 9088 01669 4457